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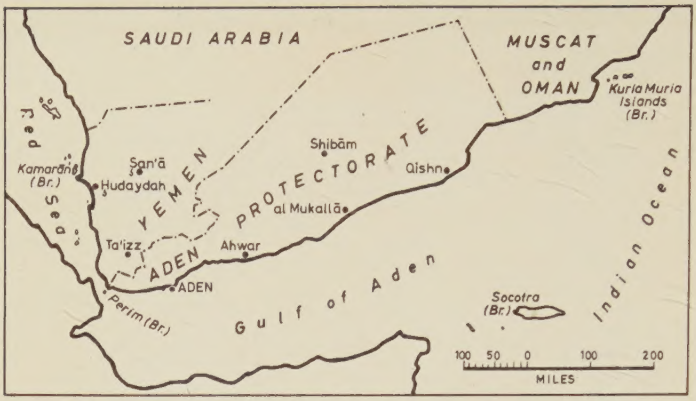

1934 Treaty Line (demarcated)

" " " (undemarcated)

The 1955 Line

Boundary between Eastern Aden Protectorate and Sultanate of Muscat and Oman

Boundary between Aden Colony and Aden Protectorate

DISCARD

SAN'Ā

RAMLAT SAB'ATAYN

Shabwah

Harīb

BEIHAN

UPPER WAHIDI SULTANATE

Nisāb

Ataq

AULAQI

Sa'īd

Habbān

Yashbum

AUDHALI

Al Bayda

DATHINAH

Mukayrās

LOWER AULAQI

Mūdīyah

Qa'tabah

UPPER YAFA

Sanāh

Dhala

al Qarāh

Lawdar

LOWER YAFA

ADHLI

TA'IZZ

DHALA

HAUSHABI

Kirsh

Shuqrā

Ja'ar

Zinjibār

Abyan Delta

Lahej

LAHEJ

AQRABI

ADEN COLONY

Little Aden

ADEN

PERIM Is. (Br.)

Kamarān Is. (Br.)

Salīf

Hudaydah

Red Sea

Gulf

SOUTH

20 0 20

I A R A B I A
MUSCAT and OMAN
Undefined approximate alignment
Sanāw
Shiḥan
Thamūd
Ḥabrūt
P R O T E C T O R A T E
Manwakh
Damqūt
M A H R A
KATHIRI
Tarīm
Shibām
Sayūn
Qishn
Sayḥūt
Q A I T I
ash Shiḥr
al Mukallā
A d e n
SHAYKH UTHMAN
Al Ittihad
Khormaksar Airfield
Steamer Point
Crater
ADEN
LITTLE ADEN
Refinery
Gulf of Aden
1 0 1 2 3 4
MILES
BIA
80 100
CHARLES GREEN.

Aden, once a small coaling station on the route to India, is today a thriving urban center, politically explosive and militarily of key importance. For three years, first as Governor of Aden, then as High Commissioner, Sir Charles Johnston presided over the delicate and highly controversial process whereby Aden was merged with the Federation of South Arabia. For the previous four years, from the middle of the Suez crisis in 1956 until 1960, he had been British Ambassador to Jordan. He wrote this book during his final leave from Aden, when the events of his stewardship were still fresh in his mind.

Sir Charles, however, is concerned not only with telling the complex and exciting story of these events and introducing the reader to its chief characters—Aden politicians, sultans and sheikhs from the hinterland, British officials—though this is inevitably his central theme. As a diplomat temporarily serving as governor, he is absorbed by the contrasts and the similarities between the two roles and the traditions of the two services. He manages to convey what in fact it feels like to be the governor of a colony such as Aden, not only in big things but also in small. He describes and discusses the extent and limitations of the governor's power and the effect, stimulating and burdensome, that it has on the man who wields it.

His book is not written for specialists—though they will find in it much that is worthy of close attention—but rather for the general reader. Beneath a very personal and almost light-hearted treatment of events, lies a serious purpose: to interest the reader in South Arabia and throw light on the problems it faces on the way to independence.

Sir Charles Johnston strenuously denies that he is an expert on Arabia, but throughout his book a deep and sympathetic understanding of the Arabs is everywhere apparent.

East: Ambassador to Jordan, 1956; Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Aden, 1960; High Commissioner for Aden and the Protectorate of South Arabia, 1963.

THE VIEW FROM STEAMER POINT

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CHARLES HEPBURN JOHNSTON

The View from Steamer Point

THREE CRUCIAL YEARS IN SOUTH ARABIA

FREDERICK A. PRAEGER, *Publishers*
NEW YORK · WASHINGTON

BOOKS THAT MATTER

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Introduction

At the end of seven years in Arabia I am all too conscious of being in no way an expert about the Arabs. This is a shaming admission to have to make, so I may as well come out with it at once. My picture of them is empirical, the impression picked up by a non-specialist diplomat more familiar with Western Europe than with anywhere else. Pitched into Arabia in middle age, as Ambassador, then Governor, then High Commissioner, I found that my jobs, so far from allowing me to Arabize myself, demanded instead a certain professional Englishness. I have an instinctive liking and sympathy for the Arabs, but my view of them is, frankly, a hundred per cent insular and British. After so many years among them, I still speak their language haltingly; I have never worn Arab clothes; I dislike eating on the floor.

These defects are, I recognize, piercingly reflected in the present work. The reader who is looking for something in the usual tradition of English books about Arabia is advised to put it down straight away. There is not a sheep's eye in the whole performance. There are no uncomfortable journeys, no accounts of Arab customs, no digressions on Arab psychology. There is no attempt to portray the Arabs as a race of extraordinary freaks whom Englishmen can never understand without years of specialized study, and whom British policy can never benefit because they are, *au fond*, unhelpable. On the contrary, there will be a modest suggestion that the Arabs, while certainly odd, are not much odder than, say, the Spaniards or the Irish, and nothing like so odd as the English; and there will be a conviction, over-optimistic perhaps but nevertheless firm, that they are capable of improving their position in the world, and that in this process

there is still a part for Western and specifically British help to play.

I was sent to Amman in November 1956, while the Suez operation was in progress, with instructions to wind up the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty and at the same time to salvage anything possible from what looked like the total shipwreck of our friendship with Jordan. This part of the story will have to be told later, if at all. The subject of the present book is my tour in Aden between 1960 and 1963.

In spite of the contrast between Jordan as I left it – a fully independent country, unconnected with us even by treaty – and Aden as I found it – a Crown Colony and a Protectorate – a common thread was there. Having seen the end of a process in one part of Arabia, I was to witness its beginnings in another.

This book is divided into two parts. First there is an account of my time in Aden. We are still too close to the events of this period for comprehensive narration or definitive analysis. I therefore have had to content myself with a piece of personal impressionism, which I hope may have some interest for the reader, and some footnote value for the historian. In the second part I have put down some more general reflections drawn from my service in Arabia.

I have not tried to play the historian myself, and have given no synopsis of previous developments in the area. These have already been summarized in other works, notably Sir Tom Hickinbotham's *Aden*, and Mr. Harold Ingrams' *Yemen*, and form the subject of a full-length study by Dr. R. J. Gavin which is shortly to appear. In fact the record of Britain's previous achievement in South Arabia is one of the most picturesque episodes in our imperial story. It is an area where order has been stamped on to worse than primaeval chaos, and extinct volcanoes have been made to blossom like the bougainvillaea. After long and difficult travail a new South Arabian nation is being born. In our present phase of national self-interrogation it is good to know and to blazon abroad that the heroes of this chapter are the British Colonial Service in the field. (I use the old title deliberately. The present one, 'The Overseas Civil Service', is to my mind dislikeable be-

cause it has that apologetic ring which future students will identify as the trademark of our age.)

The main theme of the narrative section is the merger which brought Aden into the Federation of South Arabia in January 1963. Nothing can be more dispiriting, nothing can make a text more unreadable, than the jargon of Colonial 'shop'. The mere terms: Executive Council, Legislative Council (both particularly unattractive in the abbreviated forms currently used, 'Exco.' and 'Legco.'), *ex officio's*, loss-of career, abolition-of-office – the whole thing has an indescribably gloomy sound to the ear and is calculated to drive away anybody but the specialist. This is not intended to be an account for specialists, and the simplest course might have been to omit the story of the negotiations in any detail. In fact I have not done so. Instead I have tried to pierce the opaque haze of expertise and reveal the realities of a drama which to my mind is of fascinating general and human interest for the world in which we live. Behind the fog of technicalities I shall hope to let the reader glimpse two separate processes: a Colonial power withdrawing in good order; and, a rarity this, not found in most other negotiations of the same character, a prudent courtship between two utterly different local entities – Aden and the Federation – resulting in a marriage which, though not a love-match, and though subject to the violent crises that are normal between partners of strong character, at least had some prospects of turning into a solid union.

Events in the area are moving fast, and no one can tell how the chapter will end. But, whatever the outcome, the story of these three years seems to me unusual enough to be worth the telling.

Under its raconteurish form, this book has a basically serious purpose: to interest the reader in South Arabia and its problems as it approaches independence. Although Aden has been British for a century and a quarter, the whole area remains far too little known in this country, to such an extent that the questions facing it are misunderstood even by experts on Middle East affairs.

In the hope of bringing the story to life I have written with some frankness about living people and living difficulties. From the people, I must ask forgiveness if in any instance the candour

has been overdone; my object has been in a few words to conjure up a physical presence, and this is an effort in which it is all too easy to become disobliging. As for the difficulties, they were, and are, tough-skinned enough to take care of themselves.

Throughout I have used the expression 'South Arabia' as meaning the whole area of Aden and the Aden Protectorate, but as excluding the Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.

I am most grateful to the Colonial Office for their large-minded tolerance in allowing me to publish this book. The views which it contains are my personal ones and not those of the British Government. Since writing the book I have reverted to the Foreign Service, and for this reason I have felt obliged to treat the foreign policy aspects of my tour in Aden – notably our relations with the Yemen – in a summary manner.

I was greatly helped by comments on the draft of the book from Lady Antonia Fraser, Miss Irene Stirling, Sir Hugh Foot, Mr. Harold Ingrams and Mr. Mark Bonham Carter. Hugh Foot and Harold Ingrams know far more about the Arabs and about colonial administration than I ever shall. Their criticisms, expressed with the candour of friendship, were the more devastating because delivered from diametrically opposite points of the compass. My manuscript was left wallowing in the trough of the waves, like a hulk that had been raked by heavy broadsides from port and starboard respectively. *Quot proconsules tot sententiae.*

In addition Harold Ingrams was good enough to show me the proof of *The Yemen* (referred to above) before its publication. This was all the more generous of him because it enabled me to include in the present book a counterblast to his views on those points where I disagree with them.

A subjective sketch of this kind requires no bibliography. But I have long been enthralled by what I call the eschatology of the colonial age, and my general reading in this field has done much to stir up the ideas which I try to express in Part Two of this book. I owe a special debt of gratitude to the following: Elizabeth Monroe, for *Britain's Moment in the Middle East*; my friend Sir John Glubb, for *Britain and the Arabs*; Messrs. Robinson and

Gallagher, for *Africa and the Victorians*; the late John Strachey, for *The End of Empire*; and Robert Heussler, for *Yesterday's Rulers* – an American analysis of the Colonial Service which manages to be penetrating and balanced, and which at the same time subtly misunderstands the whole subject, so that one suspects this is *really* the historical process at work, and this is how *all* historians get their pictures slightly wrong. For an ex-governor the book provides a mixture of shock and fascination, like reading one's own obituary. Finally I am indebted to Margery Perham, for her *magistral* summing-up in *The Colonial Reckoning*. I have got intense enjoyment out of all these books, and it is satisfying to have the present opportunity of recording my thanks to their authors.

The end paper map is based on a map published by H.M. Stationery Office and is reproduced with their permission.

For the photographs I am obliged to the Information Departments of the Federal and Aden State Governments; to Lady Alexandra Metcalfe; to Squadron Leader Philip Boys-Stones; to Mrs. Arthur Watts; to Major General Vivian Street; and, above all, to my dear wife.

My wider debt to her will be evident throughout the story which follows.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

Aleppo to Victoria

In the Foreign Service you usually hear of the next transfer just as you are off to some particularly idiotic lunch party, and have to sit smiling and talking trivialities when all you want to do is tell your wife the news and discuss it with her. The first word of our move from Amman came in an even more teasing form. The Foreign Office bag usually arrived in the Embassy on Tuesday, at about eleven in the morning, and I always left an hour free of engagement for reading what it contained. On this particular Tuesday, some American statistical experts were due to come and see me, to talk about aid to Jordan in connection with a future census. I had fixed the appointment for noon. By ill luck, the bag was late that morning. For some time I had sensed, as one does, that transfer was in the air, so I whizzed through the pile of letters looking for anything of a specially sinister appearance. Half-way down was a big blue envelope marked 'Secret and Personal', and carrying the initials of a superior of mine in the Foreign Office. I snatched it up, slit it open, and read the following lines:

'My dear Charles, By this bag you will be getting a letter from the Secretary of State for the Colonies offering you the job of Governor of Aden. While at first sight . . .'

At that moment the door of my office was thrown open and in came the American statistical team. For the next hour and a half, with this bombshell inside me, I was in for demography at its most pedestrian.

The proposal, when I got to it, was that I should be seconded to the Colonial Office for three years as Governor of Aden, and then return to the Foreign Service. Thinking it over during the next few days and talking about it from every angle with my

wife, I set out the Pros and Cons in my mind very roughly as follows.

Pros. 1. I had never turned a job down before, and did not see very well how I could start with this one.

2. Amman with its unending excitement had spoilt my wife and me for normal employment at a conventional diplomatic post. Here, surprisingly, was something completely new and therefore stimulating and attractive.

3. There was a tremendous job of work to be done in Aden. It would be good to have something which I could get my teeth into.

4. As Governor, I knew I should be much more my own master than as Ambassador. I should hold the executive power and would myself have to take most of the decisions, instead of observing and reporting to London on decisions taken by other people. The experience of direct authority was not something to forego.

5. It was, I won't say the path of duty, which would be pompous without being really true, but it was the path of something or other, and from the moment I read the first sentence of the Foreign Office letter, an irrational streak in me knew that it would be impossible for me to refuse.

All the same, the *Cons* were imposing.

1. Was I being appointed to haul down the flag? If so, my whole instinct would be to say no. True, imperial systems are something transitional and cannot be maintained beyond a certain moment. But I personally had been the agent chosen to liquidate our treaty position in Jordan, and had no wish to acquire the character of a professional disengager.

2. Would I be employable afterwards? I liked the Foreign Service, and it is always a mistake to cut oneself off from one's base. In how many countries, great or small, would an ex-Governor be welcome as Ambassador?

3. In matters of staff, Amman in my time had been the spoilt darling of Whitehall. The pick of the Foreign Service had been sent out to my Chancery and, when I asked for one of the best Brigadiers in the Army to head our Training Mission with the

Jordanian Armed Forces, the War Office pulled him out of his job and sent him to Amman at once. Was I wise to desert this general favourite and take on instead what might prove to be a Cinderella?

4. And was I right to leave the agreeable club of the Foreign Service, where everybody to whom one writes on any sort of official subject is a friend of many years' standing, for a Service where I knew nobody and would not have any idea how to set about getting better staff, or even whom to ask for in order to achieve that effect?

5. My Arabic was just adequate for Jordan, where all serious conversations were carried out with leaders who spoke excellent English. It would get me nowhere with the Sultans and Amirs of the Aden Protectorate. Throughout my time in Amman I had been working at the language and trying in a rather desultory manner to speak it better. I should now really have to put my back into this job – a disagreeable prospect.

After getting more or less reassuring answers on at least some of the Cons, I decided to accept. The last proconsul, wrote my father, who enjoyed a turn of phrase. In fact this was not so far from the truth. By the end of my three years most of the other Governors would be either ceremonial figures or rulers of fortresses and islands. I should be one of the last wielders of British authority on the mainland of any continent.

The next step was to go to London and find out in more detail what the new job would involve. The most agreeable feature of Government service abroad is travelling home on earned leave. My wife and I have always adored long train journeys, and were determined, before leaving Amman, to make the trip to London once by railway instead of the more usual air or sea from Beirut. So, that last summer in Jordan, with our transfer duly approved and announced, we motored through Syria to Aleppo and there joined the Taurus Express. Aleppo was full of things to see, castles, mosques, *suqs*: God knows what. But the only sight that we had eyes for was the line of blue sleeping cars waiting in the station.

This journey would have two special points for me. First it

would enable me to re-visit Istanbul and refresh my enthusiasm for Byzantine things at the source.

Every since boyhood I had been obsessed by the history of empires. Amongst the belfries of Oxford, Athens and pagan Rome absorbed me. While serving abroad I widened the list, backwards to the Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom, forwards to the Casa de Austria.

During my years in Amman the long, tenacious history of Constantinople had come to hold a special fascination for me. It was not only a hobby, it was a point of reference as well.

I had been to Istanbul once already, flying back to Jordan with King Hussein after one of his visits to London. The prospect of returning there was as good as a second pilgrimage to Mecca for the pious Moslem.

The other point of the journey lay in the fact that we were making it from east to west, so that the places we got to would become progressively less exotic as we went along – a much more interesting way of seeing them than the conventional progress from everyday mundanity into increasing degrees of romanticism and escape.

In Vienna, where we broke the journey for a few days, I wrote the following in my notebook: 'Aleppo, after the drive from Amman, looks a great sophisticated business city. Wide streets, bright lights, and at Baron's Hotel the Armenian owner has an English wife, and on the terrace his children are talking English to a wire-haired terrier puppy.

'Syria has its cinematic quality all right, but not at all what tradition suggests. The placards protesting the country's loyalty to the United Arab Republic, the Bandung-ish inscriptions on the walls (Well come Shri Nehru), the secret police, the silences and omissions of private speech, the rhetoric of the radio, the buzzing flies. More like Third Man country than Lawrence of Arabia.

'Then Turkey comes as purest Mitteleuropa, green, scruffy, up and down, with fast muddy rivers. A minareted Württemberg. And the industrial quarters of Adana and Ankara are just great chunks of Dortmund and Duisburg.

'Then the smiling, classical pastoralism of Turkey in Europe.

Green meadows, slow streams, reapers resting in the shade: the Home Counties of the Byzantine Empire. A few mosques about, but otherwise not much change. The sweetness of country life, in the conscious presentation of a seventh-century mosaic.

'Part of the fun of a long train journey is the unpacking of books, and brushes, and cards, and bottles, and the organization of a daily routine. Awake about four, up with the blind, lie back watching a completely new and strange landscape – Anatolia, Bulgaria, Styria – rolling past in the deliberately flat, underplayed, unglamorous light of the early morning.

'Sleep again, then two hours of reading Arabic and looking up words – interesting, but I can feel it tiring me, a thing which never happens to me from any other mental exercise. Then out with our bottle-basket, and the delicious hour of gin and lime, which in sleeping cars and small yachts – as indeed in ordinary life – is usually the best part of the day. Lunch, sleep, pipe, read, whisky, dinner, patience, bed. All the time, through the open communicating door, an exchange of comments with N: shorthand observations, personal judgements, gossip, imitations. A good trip.

'One small thing irritates me. In trying to explain my new appointment (and, reasonably enough, finding this difficult to do), *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph* have built me up as a tremendous Arabic-speaker, which I am not, and never will be. My Arabic is hopelessly Anglo-Egyptian, Gezirah Sporting Club, shufti-bint, whisky-soda kebīr. But this phony reputation at least puts spurs behind my present bout of study.'

After a week or so of leave in London, we were reduced to our usual metropolitan condition. The sleep of absolute exhaustion, as if knocked out with a hammer. The impression that we had too many close friends who all felt hurt if we didn't ring them up soon enough after arrival; at the same time the feeling that, outside a small group in Whitehall, nobody cares a hoot what one does abroad, and all that people can think about is Ascot and Goodwood.

In general the reaction of our friends to the new appointment was one of tolerant, amused detachment, as if we had just decided

to gratify some extraordinary whim. 'Aden? A bit hot – what?' was the standard comment. At Balliol we used to have a legend about an undergraduate at Wadham who, when asked what college he was at, always replied: 'Wadham-oh.' When asked why he gave this answer, the undergraduate explained that when he he said he was at Wadham, the reaction was always 'Oh'; so, with experience, he found it simpler to anticipate and compress the whole thing into one word: 'Wadham-oh.' In the same way I was tempted, when asked what my next job was to be, to reply: 'Aden-a-bit-hot-what.'

CHAPTER 2

Arrival

Going straight from one post to another, without a break in between, you have some difficulty at first in catching up.

It was the day after our arrival and we were bowling along the causeway on a tour of the new domain. The scene could not have been more unmistakably Aden. To the left, the harbour, with queues of large ships lying moored in the fairway; to the right, a lagoon from which now and then clouds of flamingos rose and wheeled away, their pink feathers catching the afternoon sun; beyond, the shallow pyramids of the salt-pans, and the Don Quixote-like windmills which are the trademark of the Khormaksar isthmus. Everything seemed well-ordered and under control.

Suddenly I noticed a grey-green column driving towards us from the other end of the causeway. Immediately an automatic response operated inside me: 'Artillery on the move. What unit do they belong to? Who is the Colonel? How soon can I get in touch with the Military Attaché and the head of the Military Mission?'

As if reading my thought, the young man sitting beside the driver turned round and explained: 'Q Troop, Royal Horse Artillery – they'll be firing the salute at tomorrow's parade.' I remembered where I was, and laughed. Decidedly it needed time to get used to the relaxed atmosphere of Aden – to the A.D.C. in plain clothes on the front seat of the car, instead of the police corporal with a spiked helmet and a revolver. Military coups by British troops are about the only thing that Governors of Colonies do not have to worry about. I felt ashamed of the second or so during which I had thought that this might be the beginning of one.

The plan had been that my wife and I should take all our leave at home that summer, then return to Jordan for two months before flying direct from Amman to Aden in October. I had looked forward to a quiet time in Amman, with plenty of opportunity to read myself into the new post. *Dis aliter visum.*

Shortly after our return the Jordanian Prime Minister, my close friend Hazza Majali, was murdered by the explosion of a time-bomb in his office. This crime was followed by a period of extreme tension between Jordan and the United Arab Republic. It was the worst crisis of my tour in Jordan, and it had only recently subsided when the time came for me to move to Aden.

Fortunately the transition was arranged in the most agreeable possible manner. Air Marshal Sam Elworthy, the Commander-in-Chief in Aden, and his wife, agreed to come up and stay with us for our last few days in Jordan; we were then to accompany them on their return journey by special R.A.F. aircraft to Aden.

To get us there on time the departure from Amman airfield had to take place before dawn. Our farewell was dramatic in the Jordanian tradition. By the headlights of cars we could see the Embassy staff drawn up beside the Hastings, together with all the officers of the British Training Mission in uniform. It was a sad and affecting moment as we said good-bye to those who had shared with us the pressures and excitements of the last thrilling years.

After the exhausting weeks of crisis, combined with the scarcely less telling strain of farewell parties, we were not in our freshest and most impressionable condition for our arrival in a new territory. All the same, it was a great moment when our Hastings reached the bottom end of the Red Sea and, above Perim Island, turned sharply to port; we had rounded the corner of the Yemen and could now fly straight along the South Arabian coast to Aden. It was about noon and Sam Elworthy toasted us in an excellent dry Martini as we crossed the borders of the Protectorate. Suddenly there was a violent thump; the aircraft went down like a lift, and our Martinis shot up to the ceiling. It was a normal effect of turbulence as we began to fly over the sun-warmed desert. On either side of us fighter aircraft of a Southern Rhodesian squadron from Aden had taken position and we could see them

also shooting up and down in their stations like porpoises at play. It was the first of many joltings to be administered to me by my new charge.

The rest of that day was a film blurred with fatigue, and I cannot begin to describe it in detail. At the airport, Kenneth Simmonds, Chief Secretary and Acting Governor, was there to greet us, surrounded by Service chiefs, senior officials, and local notables. Technically I would not count as Governor until I had been sworn in, so the reception at the airport was unofficial. Nevertheless, as my wife and I moved down the well-marshalled lines of dignitaries shaking hands and exchanging amiabilities with each, the whole proceeding seemed to me to be pretty formal. It was our first taste of the hierarchical character of Colonial life. Then, after a quick lunch and a short sleep, came the state drive to the Legislative Council for the swearing-in ceremony: white uniform, tropical helmet with feathers, armoured car escort, police motor-cycle outriders, the full treatment. The Council Chamber, a Victorian Gothic chapel on a hill in the old quarter, was packed with all the rank and fashion of Aden. The ceremony was mercifully short, and my morale received a valuable boost from the perception that, as he administered to me the oath of allegiance, the newly arrived Chief Justice, Richard Le Gallais, in his full-bottomed wig, was even hotter than I in my feathers.

I expected a roughish ride in Aden, and from the outset there were signs that I was not mistaken. From Cairo the *Voice of the Arabs* greeted my arrival by saying that I was known as an imperialist die-hard because of my plots and intrigues against the free Arabs in Jordan, and that the Arabs of Aden had received the news of my arrival with indignation and resentment. Attempting a more factual note, the Egyptian weekly *Al Musawar* wrote: 'The new Governor is the person who supervised the landing of the British troops in 1958 to protect the Jordanian throne from the revolution of the people. His appointment in Aden is regarded as an attempt to consolidate the position of Britain in this important strategic area.'

More disturbingly, because less expectedly, there were signs of difficulty from quite a different quarter. The Federal Ministers

had declined the Government's invitation to attend both the reception for me at the airport and the swearing-in ceremony in the Legislative Council. To understand this episode, and what followed later, we must now take a look at the constitutional and political position which I found awaiting me on arrival.

At that time the British area of responsibility in South Arabia fell into four parts: Aden Colony; the Federation; the remainder of the Aden Protectorate outside the Federation; and the Islands.

The Colony itself was a tiny area, consisting of the two adjoining volcanic peninsulas of Aden and Little Aden, which stick out into the sea like the claws of a lobster buried in the sand.

Aden, though small, was rich. Thanks to its port – the busiest bunkering harbour in the world – its refinery, and its British military base, it was enjoying a period of great prosperity. It balanced its own budget, and received only minor assistance from the British Government. Its population of about a quarter of a million included some 80,000 workers who had come down from the neighbouring Yemen to try their luck in this South Arabian El Dorado, most of them returning after a few months with their savings, and being replaced by others. There were also more static Hindu, Indian Muslim and Somali minorities and an important European business community, in addition to several hundred British civil servants and several thousand British troops with their families.

Aden was a Crown Colony in what might be called the last stage but two of the normal Whitehall journey towards independence. It had a constitution, dating from November 1958, which provided for a Legislative Council with an elected majority, and for five of the unofficial (that is to say, the local) members of this Council to sit in the Executive Council with responsibility for Departments. At the time of my arrival these five were known as 'Members in Charge'; but shortly afterwards they received the more suitable title of Ministers, and I propose to refer to them as that. Of the five then in office, four were Arab and one was Indian. I shall have more to say about their personalities in a later chapter. The Ministers were responsible for the following main subjects: Labour and Welfare; Local Government; Health; Education;

Public Works and Water; Electricity; Civil Aviation; and Posts and Telegraphs.

Now I come to a problem of semantics which I propose to solve in unorthodox fashion. In certain Aden contexts – that of the Civil Service, for example – the word 'British' cannot be used, as it is in ordinary speech, to mean English, Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish, since the Adenese, as long as they remain subjects of the Queen, are British too. I have refused to surmount this difficulty by using, to denote people from the British Isles, those apologetic euphemisms of our current jargon, the words 'expatriate' and 'European', both of which have totally wrong associations. Instead, I have employed the term 'English' in its embracing sense, implying by that no more discourtesy to the Celtic minorities of our archipelago – among whom, being Scots-Cornish, I count myself – than Nelson or Palmerston did when they said 'England' with the same intention.

Apart from the five Ministers, the Executive Council included five *English ex-officio* members – the Chief Secretary, the Assistant Chief Secretary (Colony), the Financial Secretary, the Attorney-General, and a senior officer representing the Commander in Chief. In fact, under the Governor, the responsibility for defence, external affairs, internal security, finance, and the administration of the Civil Service still lay in the hands of English officials.

The present Legislative Council had been elected in January 1959 and its lifetime was due to expire in January 1963. There was already very strong pressure for further constitutional advance in Aden. The normal next step on the well-trodden path of British-controlled territories en route to independence would be a pretty full instalment of internal self-government under a local Chief Minister and a local Council of Ministers. In the previous summer there had been a debate in the Legislative Council at which unanimous support was expressed for further constitutional advance, and a resolution had been passed requesting my predecessor, Sir William Luce, 'to pursue the question as expeditiously as practicable, with the aim that any new constitution might be brought into effect not later than the end of the life of

the present Legislative Council.' We were thus virtually committed to political advance in Aden by January 1963.

That, however, was far from being the end of the story. In the period after the war the British authorities had taken the lead in organizing the work-people of the Colony into Trade Unions. A Commission of Inquiry was appointed by the Governor in 1956 to investigate the causes of industrial disputes, and in accordance with this Commission's recommendations a qualified official of the T.U.C. was sent out from Britain to give guidance and training in Trade Union affairs. It was, however, not long before the newly-founded Aden T.U.C., under the influence of Pan-Arab anti-imperialist propaganda from Cairo, began to interest itself in political matters. The extreme nationalist opposition in Aden crystallized round the movement. The A.T.U.C. refused to recognize the 1958 Constitution and boycotted the elections for the Legislative Council. As a result only 27 per cent of the electorate took part in the elections held in January 1959. The Legislative Council which emerged from those elections was therefore not widely representative. The trouble was that we had nothing else to work on. The A.T.U.C. had never produced any constructive alternative to the 1958 Constitution. Their views were entirely negative and, if pressed about what they thought should happen to Aden, they were liable to say that it should join the Yemen or the United Arab Republic. Quite apart from the British angle, either of these solutions would, to put it mildly, have been contrary to the interests of the peoples of the area. It therefore seemed that, while recognizing the limitations of the present constitutional set-up in Aden, we would have to adopt it and build on it; there simply was nothing else.

A perceptive American observer[1] later remarked that the Aden T.U.C. was certainly the most legitimate free Trade Union in the Middle East area. He added: 'It is one of the paradoxes of modern political life that free trade unions are to be found either in democratic countries or what is left of the British Colonial Empire.'

In Aden, as in so many territories in Africa, we British had

[1] Arnold Beichman, in *AFL/CIO News*, Washington, 20th July, 1963.

created a Trade Union movement which would turn into the main focus of nationalist opposition to our rule. The difference was that Aden, unlike the other territories, also possessed a moderate element among the local population whose views on the territory's future were more realistic and practicable than those of the Trade Union leadership. This difference is the key to later events.

Inland and on either side of the Colony lay the Aden Protectorate. Contained within this was the second of the entities to which I have referred: the Federation of Arab Amirates of the South.

Back in the early nineteen-fifties the then Governor, Sir Tom Hickinbotham, had seen the need to bring together into some form of joint organization those States of the Western Protectorate which could be regarded as having their areas under administrative control. This was however a long and difficult process. Although most of the Rulers recognized the advantages of a closer relationship, age-old traditions of jealousy and hostility between the various States made its realization extremely difficult. When the Federation was finally formed in 1959, it at first included six States only. Since then, four more had joined, and the Federation, now ten States strong, included almost all the territory in the Western Protectorate which could be regarded as under effective administration by any Arab authority. It had a Federal Council, or legislative assembly, in which all the member States were represented, on a basis roughly proportionate to population, by members whom the various State authorities had nominated in consultation with tribal leaders. The government was carried on by a Cabinet known as the Supreme Council, consisting at that time of seven Ministers elected by and from the Federal Council. The Ministers were in fact mostly rulers, or members of the ruling families. Their number would shortly be increased to ten, one from each of the constituent States.

Under a Treaty of 1959 the British Government was responsible for the Federation's foreign relations and its protection against external aggression; it was also formally committed to help it become politically and economically independent.

In addition, the British Government had Treaties with most of the individual States composing the Federation, providing for the

grant of British protection and advice. Broadly speaking, the protection Treaties went back to the late Victorian Age, and were originally designed against the threat of Ottoman expansion from the Yemen, while the Treaties of advice dated from the period of the nineteen-forties and fifties when effective administration was at last being established in the interior of the Protectorate.

Of the States in the Western Protectorate which were still outside the Federation, the Upper Yafai Sheikhdoms, in their wild mountains on the Yemeni border, were neither accessible nor in any way administered. For the present there was no prospect of their entering the Federation. Most of the rest were small States which wished to join the Federation and would soon be qualified to do so in terms of their accessibility and the extent of the administrative control exercised by their governments.

Our relations with the Federation and with the individual States of the Western Protectorate were conducted under the Governor by a senior British official known as the Adviser and British Agent. Kennedy Trevaskis, who held this post, had served in the Western Protectorate since 1951 and was much liked and trusted by Federal rulers and Ministers. Through him and his small staff of political officers, British advice and assistance reached the Governments of the Federation and of the States. An element of British control was there, but it was loosely and informally exercised, in a way designed to help the Federation prepare itself for independence in accordance with our commitment to it under the Treaty.

The British political officers were a robust and self-reliant crew. One of the best-loved of them, George Henderson, had won the George Medal for bravery in fighting off an ambush in the Protectorate some years before. Later on he earned a bar to his Medal, and received fatal injuries, in shielding my successor from a bomb explosion at Aden airport. I am proud to have known this modest, delightful and supremely courageous man: *le brave des braves.*

The Federation with its large area and a population which would soon approach half a million was sadly lacking in material resources. Cotton was grown in two coastal deltas, those of Lahej

and Abyan, and in several States there was increasing production of fruit and vegetables for the Aden market. All the same, the Federal Government depended almost entirely on an annual payment of about £1½ million from Britain for the balancing of their budget and for economic development work.

Although the interests of Aden and the Federation were inextricably tied up with each other, there was no formal relationship whatever between them beyond the fact that they both coexisted in a kind of personal union under the Governor. As their very closeness and connection of interests were bound to produce conflicts and clashes, the position of the Governor between them was one of some difficulty. In particular the Federal Ministers were inclined to suspect the Governor, from his more direct relationship with the Colony, and from the fact that he lived in it and was in daily contact with its British officials, of favouring Aden at the expense of the Federation.

That very briefly was the political and psychological background to the decision of the Federal Ministers not to attend the ceremonies of my arrival.

In the Eastern Protectorate there were four important States, all of which had protection Treaties with the British Government; three of them had advisory Treaties as well. Discussions about a possible separate federation in the Eastern Protectorate had recently taken place between the three principal States, namely the Qa'iti, the Kathiri and the Wahidi. No outcome had been reached in these discussions, and it already seemed likely that the Wahidi would decide, instead, to turn westwards and join the existing Federation, with which he had a common frontier and close economic and tribal ties. In that case the Kathiri would be unlikely to go into a federation with the more powerful Qa'iti alone, for fear of losing his identity in a two-sided union with his large neighbour. The remaining State, the Sultanate of Qishn, Socotra and Mahra, was ruled by a Sultan living on the island of Socotra, half-way between the coasts of Arabia and Africa; he had no effective control over his mainland territories, which extended from the eastern boundary of the Qa'iti State right up to where the Aden Protectorate marches with the Sultanate of Muscat.

In addition there were two islands administered from Aden under the direct authority of the Governor: Perim, at the mouth of the Red Sea, which we had crossed on our flight from Amman; and Kamaran, half-way up the Red Sea, close to the coast of the Northern Yemen.

Finally, the Kuria Muria Islands, off the coast of Muscat, were nominally under the authority of the Governor of Aden, but administratively they had for some time been under the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

However complicated the political problems which confronted us, it was clear that Government House would provide my wife and me with a comfortable and agreeable base from which to operate. Built in the early nineteen-fifties, it towers up on a hill commanding the entrance to the harbour. Its two wings stand at a slight angle to each other. One of these contains the dining-room and drawing-room, fine large rooms designed for entertaining on a suitably gubernatorial scale, and above them four guest bedrooms, each with a terrace in front of it looking over the sea. On the other side of the main entrance hall, dominated by a rare and imposing portrait of Queen Victoria as a young widow, was my own office, a large room in which the weekly meetings of the Executive Council were held, and above it our private quarters, including a small, bright sitting-room at the seaward end of the house. This opened on to a balcony equipped with the historic brass telescope through which the Resident of Aden had watched the Turkish forces advancing on the Colony in the First World War. In front of the house was a wide flat terrace, from which a steep path led down to a small private bathing beach. The channel into Aden harbour was only a few hundred yards away, and large ships kept passing at all hours. Half-way round the sweep of the bay were the gleaming white buildings of the new Federal capital at Al Ittihad, then nearing completion, and, directly opposite, the jagged volcanic skyline of the Little Aden Peninsula.

Scarlet bougainvillaea trained round the edge of the terrace, and clumps of white oleander massed just below it, stood out against a dark blue, wind-puckered sea dotted with white sails – the simple, classic colour-scheme of happiness.

A small enclosed garden behind the office wing offered scope for my wife's green fingers; but as gardening in Aden has always been notoriously difficult owing to the high salt content in the soil, the water and the atmosphere, this was not so much a matter of scope as of challenge.

My experience on the causeway that first afternoon had shown me that, after Jordan, I must get used to a slower tempo, to a less immediately explosive condition of affairs. Nevertheless, the volcanic possibilities were there: they might operate more slowly, but the eruption would be all the bigger for that, if and when it came. And, unlike Jordan, where I had been an observer, here the responsibility for whatever might happen to this essential British possession would be mine and mine alone.

Shortly after my arrival the Egyptian propaganda machine returned to the attack. The newspaper *Al Haqayeq* wrote: 'Charles Johnston, the new Governor of Aden (whose previous rôle in Jordan and future plots in Aden have already been exposed by *Al Haqayeq*) has been received by the Nationalists in Aden with a wave of hostile leaflets which have worried him and drawn clear lines of the dark future that will face him in the area.'

Altogether it looked like a stimulating job.

CHAPTER 3

The problem

For the amateur of imperial systems, the whole set-up was fascinatingly and typically British: a hotch-potch of heterogeneous entities stuck together with the glue of our empirical tradition. The impress of British India was heavily marked on the area. Aden itself, the half-way-house coaling station on the Suez–Bombay route, was administered under the Bombay Presidency from its capture in 1839 until 1930, and then under the Government of India; it was natural that when it passed to Colonial Office control in 1937 it should become a Crown Colony and remain under direct British administration. By way of contrast the Aden Protectorate was a real Protectorate, that is to say, a group of protected States with recognized rulers exercising full authority outside the fields of foreign affairs and defence – not just a colony under a different name, as was often the case with British Protectorates in Africa. New Delhi ran the Aden Protectorate with cynicism and economy; the different rulers with whom we had Treaties of protection paid ceremonial visits to the Residency once a year and were there presented with rifles and cartridges to fire off at each other until the date of their next annual visit came round.

After the Colonial Office took over Aden from the Government of India in 1937 there was a gradual change in policy. More ideals were available – also more cash. Reluctantly at first, but as if by an inexorable force, the British authorities were drawn into the business of pacification. In the broad daylight of the forties and fifties of the twentieth century, huge areas of the interior were brought for the first time under beneficent British control.

This control was loose and indirect in character, but no less effective for that. The process was camouflaged by the fact that the areas in question had long been coloured red on the map, owing to the existence of protection Treaties between Britain and the States concerned. For this reason the assertion of British authority, although a revolutionary development, had not the appearance of being so. Seen in perspective, however, it is an extraordinary, little-publicized achievement of disinterested European imperialism; perhaps, historically speaking, its last foray in the world.

The men who carried it out in the field – Belhaven, Ingrams and others – are in fact the last breakers of new ground in our long imperial tradition; and for violent energy and eccentric individualism some of them seem more akin to the pioneers of our eighteenth-century Empire than to officials of their own generation.

In the course of all these processes, we British had introduced into the area artificial distinctions of an administrative type: between Eastern and Western Protectorate, and above all, between Protectorate and Colony. While in its past history Aden has had periods of separate existence apart from its hinterland, when Captain Haines captured it for Queen Victoria in 1839 it formed part of the adjoining State of Lahej. In any case, by now Aden and its hinterland were intricately involved with each other and completely inter-dependent. All Aden's water, a high proportion of its labour, and most of its fruit and vegetables, came in from the adjoining Federation. The road linking Aden itself with the Little Aden Peninsula, which also formed part of Aden Colony, bordered the Federation on one side and in fact ran right past the front door of the Federal capital, Al Ittihad. Similarly, the Federation depended almost entirely on Aden for its communications with the outer world both by sea and by air; indeed the quickest way to travel from one outlying part of the Federation to another was usually via the Colony. From the British point of view, while our military base installations were in Aden, we too needed the Federation as well, both as a glacis between the Aden base and the Yemen, and also as the area of recruitment for the Aden Protectorate Levies and the Federal Guard, the two Arab security forces

which ensured the defence of the Yemeni frontier as well as the maintenance of order inside the Federation. Thus Aden and the Federation were absolutely complementary. The natural capital needed its natural hinterland, and vice versa. Existing in administrative separation, they were like a head and a body cut off from each other.

In this situation it was only possible to conclude that the best solution for all concerned would be a merger of the Colony and the Federation into a single unit, having a special relationship with Britain which would ensure us the retention of our strategic facilities for as long as we needed them.

If that conclusion was right, then it would be a mistake for us to pursue the diametrically opposite course of allowing Aden and the Federation to develop separately towards independence. Yet it was clear that constitutional advance in the Colony must continue in one form or another. By its acceptance of the Legislative Council's resolution of last summer, the Government of Aden was formally committed to this course. Indeed it was essential for us to follow it, not only because of Britain's general principles and of the state of opinion in the world, but also, more specifically, because without it we should lose the support of the moderate democratic leaders who were our most reliable friends in Aden. Failing that support, our tenure of the Aden base would be precarious indeed.

It was thus necessary somehow to gear in and combine two quite different concepts, namely, that of a merger between Aden and the Federation, and that of a further instalment of constitutional advance in Aden itself. These principles would certainly take some reconciling. How to do so was an extremely acute problem, already arousing understandable emotions and nervousness both in the Colony and in the Federation. The leaders of moderate opinion in Aden understood the need for merger with the Federation, but did not wish this to happen in a way which would lose Aden its separate identity and in particular its relatively advanced political and social institutions. The Federal leaders on their side were worried that constitutional advance in Aden might lead in the future to an independent and hostile

régime there which could cut off their only natural access to the outside world. There was a great deal of tension and touchiness on both sides.

At the same time the whole problem was dominated by a ticking time-bomb – the fixed date of January 1963 when the life of the Colony's present Legislative Council was due to end. If it was correct that any decision about merger must be combined with one about the constitutional future of Aden, then the whole complex must somehow be sorted out and decided in good time – if possible at least a year in advance – before the January 1963 deadline. Otherwise we would risk giving the impression of abandoning orderly methods and indulging in last-minute constitutional adjustments, thus adding gratuitously to the difficulty of defending our action in public. This in practice meant that the British Government ought to take their decision by the autumn of 1961.

In broad outline these thoughts had already been put to the Colonial Office in a preliminary way by my predecessor. Before I left London the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Macleod, had asked me to look into the question and put up recommendations within six months of my arrival in Aden. By March 1961 I felt ready to go into print.

It seemed to me, I wrote, that constitutional advance in Aden was essential, but that it must not only be unmistakably intended as an approach to merger, but must also be so designed as to facilitate the merger process and to minimize the risk of it going wrong. As I saw it, the most difficult aspect of the problem was the exact relationship to be established between constitutional advance in Aden and the merger. Which should come first, and how should they be dovetailed into each other? It was clear that this would need further consideration by all concerned. As a first step I suggested three-sided discussions between the British Government and representatives of the Federation and of Aden.

While the path was clearly full of serious risks, I saw no reason myself for excessive pessimism. In the latter months of 1958, before the introduction of the Aden Constitution, the two radical nationalist movements – the Aden T.U.C. and the

South Arabian League – had come together in a brief honeymoon and succeeded in uniting all the extreme elements behind them against the proposed Constitution. They were supported by unceasing invective from the Voice of the Arabs in Cairo. Many feared that the Constitution would not survive such attacks. In the event these anxieties had proved unfounded and the new Government had settled down remarkably quickly and successfully. This defeat, and the clear proof that the British Government were serious in their determination to introduce more liberal constitutional arrangements in Aden, had disheartened the extreme nationalists and reduced them to a disarray from which they had not yet fully recovered.

In addition I believed that further constitutional advance in Aden would develop, in the Colony Ministers, qualities which were still latent. There was no reason to think that they would not grow up to meet the increased burden of responsibility which would be put upon them.

It was going to be extremely difficult to achieve agreement on the conditions under which Aden should enter the Federation. There would be, broadly speaking, two extreme views: first, that to be expected from the Aden Ministers, namely, that the Colony should be regarded as equal to the whole existing Federation, and that the merger should therefore be treated as a union between equal partners; and secondly, the view that the Federal Ministers would certainly adopt, namely, that Aden was simply one more State like the ten components of the existing Federation. The actual merger would have to be effected on some basis in between these two extremes. In any case, it was evident that both in view of the British base in Aden, and in order to safeguard the relatively high standard of economic and social development there, some special status must be devised for the Colony inside the Federation.

As soon as the marriage between Aden and the Federation had been successfully consummated, the next step would be to bring in the Qa'iti and Kathiri States of the Eastern Protectorate.

At the same time, it was obvious, I thought, that a substantial increase in British financial aid to the South Arabian area was

desirable. In particular, a rapid economic advancement of the Federation was now required, not only to promote stability there and thus to increase its value as a protective zone for our base in the Colony; but also to enhance the prosperity of the Colony, as being the Federation's only major port, and give it something to replace the entrepot trade which Aden was steadily losing to neighbouring ports like Assab and Jibouti.

Secondly, the accelerated pace of economic development was marked almost everywhere in the Arab world outside the Aden Protectorate. Jordan, which no longer even had a Treaty of Alliance with us, possessed a magnificent trunk-road system and a first-class new port at Aqaba, given to it by the Americans and ourselves, together with a U.S./U.K. grant-in-aid of roughly £17,000,000 a year to cover the budget deficit. (I was the last person who should criticize our policy of aid to Jordan. Both that country, and South Arabia, were highly important Arab territories, whose integrity it was essential to protect in the world as it was at that time. The difference was that in Jordan, since the termination of the Treaty in 1957, we had no military facilities, while in Aden we had perhaps the most important of all our overseas bases.) The Yemen, despite the mediaeval character of the Imam's régime, had obtained new roads and new ports by playing off the two world blocs against each other. Our friends in the Protectorate were aware of these developments and could not fail to contrast them with conditions in their own country. In effect the Protectorate had suffered relatively to the rest of the area because of its British-protected status.

While increased financial aid was desirable for general reasons, it also, so far as Aden and the Federation were concerned, had a particular point, in that it would most certainly be required in respect of certain specific features of any merger between the two. The Adenese were a predominantly mercantile community. If they once got the impression that the Colony was going to lose financially by entering a union with the Federation, the chance of any sort of voluntary merger would be lost for good. If the British Government came to the conclusion, as I hoped they would, that merger represented the right policy, then any

necessary dowry for this union would have to come out of their pocket and not the pocket of the Adenese.

At the same time it was obvious that, even though we believed the merger to be in the interests of the area and its peoples, to put it into effect against the opposition which must be expected from the Pan-Arab propaganda machine and from interested local parties would require the exercise on our part of resolution and leadership; qualities which sound good in theory, but in practice imply the use of cunning and a certain capacity for roughness. Once we had set our hands to the task, we must not shrink from its implications.

At the same time I felt strongly that we had no reason to be ashamed of our objectives. This was after all a special case in the history of the late-Colonial era. Instead of conflicting, the interests of colonizer and colonized were here in substantial agreement and pointed to the same solution: the continued co-operation of Colony, Protectorate and Britain, on a basis in keeping with the times in which we live. True, there was every possibility of things going wrong, and even some risk of our losing our position in Aden altogether during the transitional process. For that reason, we would have to play our cards for all they were worth. Given good management and – almost more important in the Middle East – good luck, we need not, I thought, despair of achieving some such objective as I have outlined.

I personally very much hoped that we would be able to do so, and for a reason which had nothing to do with strategy or even with oil. As I saw it, the Arabs were going to need outside help for a considerable time to come, to enable them to take their proper place in the modern world, and objectively speaking, we British, with all our mistakes, seemed better qualified to do this job than any of the other foreign powers that had attempted it. As long as we needed the oil of the Persian Gulf, we should have a mercenary motive for keeping the idea of Anglo-Arab partnership alive. I would however hope that such partnership could continue even after the end of the oil era. Our special national qualities would not die out just because atomic energy had supplanted internal combustion. The Arabs would still need foreign

help – perhaps more then than ever. It would be a fine thing if we were still in a position to give it, and still had relationships with parts of the Arab world which would make it natural for us to do so.

I put these general ideas to the Colonial Office, then sat back to await their answer. While at that stage I had not been authorized to discuss detailed constitutional matters with Federal or Colony Ministers, I had some knowledge of what was in their minds, and felt in all modesty that my proposals interpreted their wishes, indeed that I was simply trying to find practical expression for conceptions which originated with them.

CHAPTER 4

On tour

As soon as we had settled in, my wife and I lost no time in embarking on the most exciting and picturesque part of our duties, and set out on our first tour in the Protectorate.

We started this off with a visit to Lahej, the nearest as well as the richest and most powerful of the States forming the Western Protectorate, and at that time the most recent adherent to the Federation.

Lahej State begins just beyond the outlying Aden suburb of Sheikh Othman. At the border we were met by a guard of honour of State Police in distinctive khaki topees – rather like the 'Peake Pasha' helmet sported by the Jordanian Police but without the metal spike on top. A jeep escort conducted us along the remaining fifteen miles of road to Lahej. This road was asphalted as far as Bir Nasser, one of the main sources of the Colony's water supply, but immediately thereafter became an unmetalled track – an embarrassing reminder of the Colony's level of wealth as compared with even the richest State of the Protectorate.

In the big main square of Lahej there was a detachment of the Federal Guard drawn up, with an Arab pipe band and a troop of British artillery to fire the salute. This sounded quite deafening at such close quarters, and drew prolonged cheering from the schoolchildren lined up at the edge of the square. Otherwise my visit evoked no popular reaction either one way or the other. I was told that, two years or more before, Nasserite slogans would certainly have been shouted out and painted on the walls.

Sultan Fadhl bin Ali is a man of distinction. He is privately known to the British political officers in the Western Aden Protec-

torate as 'the Etonian'. (A 'Wykehamist' and a 'Choirboy' will be encountered later among his colleagues.) He is a man of about fifty, who looks less, with beautiful manners and an Indo-Arab get-up of elegant simplicity: white crested turban, white button-up tunic, white skirt. (I have never known the technical names for eastern articles of clothing, and have no intention of learning them either. To my mind they diffuse that atmosphere of boredom and faded local colour which makes so much English writing about foreign parts quite unreadable.)

The story of Sultan Fadhl's accession is one of those real-life fairy stories which sometimes occur in Royal families – not only in Arabia. His father, Sultan Ali, was killed accidentally by British forces when the Turkish troops were marching on Aden during the First World War. The succession then passed to Fadhl's uncle, Abdul Karim; he was succeeded first by his elder son, who after five years of rule was deposed for murder, and secondly by his younger son, Ali, who after five years of rule defected to the United Arab Republic, thus bringing the wheel back full-circle, and clearing Fadhl's way to the throne.

There is about the court of Lahej an atmosphere of complication which can be sensed by the most casual visitor. The last Sultan, a young, half-Westernized playboy whose effect on susceptible European ladies could be considerable, had been greatly influenced by the leader of the extreme nationalist faction in Lahej, Mohammed Ali Al Jifri, one of three brothers belonging to a prominent local family of Sayids or hereditary religious notables. Sayid Mohammed Ali and his brothers were now in exile; but other members of the Jifri family were in Lahej and much in the Sultan's company.

Since his accession, Sultan Fadhl had shown considerable powers of leadership, and in 1959 had brought Lahej into the newly founded Federation, crippled hitherto by Sultan Ali's refusal to join it. In spite of the politically sophisticated, pro-nationalist atmosphere of Lahej town, Sultan Fadhl had met with none of the local opposition which might have been expected. He was helped by a number of factors: his own previous experience as acting head of the administration under his cousin

Sultan Ali, his knowledge and skill in dealing with tribal matters, and also his high degree of political dexterity and sense of compromise.

With his personal qualities, and with the relative importance of his State, commanding as it does the main land route from Aden to the Yemen, Sultan Fadhl had already acquired a position of influence and prestige in the Supreme Council of the Federation, where he was Minister of Defence and Adviser on External Affairs, and throughout the Protectorate. He was popular and respected in Aden. A moderate nationalist, he looked ahead to the independence of a State comprising the Federation and Aden Colony, but realized that this goal must be achieved in co-operation and agreement with Britain.

After the parade we sat indoors with the Sultan and his senior counsellors, drinking water-melon juice, a Lahej speciality with deliciously soothing properties. The room, cool, pillared, high-ceilinged, and floored with black Italian marble, was comfortable and in good, if rather impersonal, taste. The Sultan's wife, who, like most of the ladies of the Protectorate, was still in purdah, did not join us. After my wife had visited her in her separate quarters, we went in to a highly spiced and curried lunch, well served in European style. As I looked around at these grave, politic gentlemen, with their dark skins and their turbans of lime green, mauve, or Schiaparelli pink, I felt that any rash word spoken at the table would echo tomorrow in Taiz, the Yemeni diplomatic capital, and the day after perhaps in Cairo. I had come a very long way indeed from the goat's hair tents of Transjordan and still farther from the Westernized Levantine drawing-rooms of Jerusalem. We were in the separate world of Southern Arabia, and more than half-way to India.

After a silken leave-taking with His Highness and the notables of Lahej, we drove back to Aden. There had been heavy rainfall the night before our visit, and this was repeated immediately after it. I heard later that the Sultan had connected the rain and the visit, and had said that by Allah the new Governor was *sa'id*, that is to say, a bringer of good luck. A reputation for this quality can be a minor political asset in the Arab world. Somehow or other

I had acquired it in Jordan; it could do no harm if the same thing happened in South Arabia.

Our next visit was to Zinjibar, capital of the Fadhli State, which, thanks to the cotton production of Abyan, was then the second most prosperous State after Lahej.

The fertile Abyan Delta, which is shared by the Fadhli and Lower Yafai States, was originally developed during the Second World War to grow cereals for Aden and so to save shipping space. When the war ended, it was turned over to cotton cultivation, and the success of the scheme had transformed the political character of the two Sultanates. Tribesmen had become agriculturalists over a large area. Relations between the Fadhli and the Lower Yafai, which for years had been bitter owing to disputes about water, had now been greatly improved, and they were both represented on the Abyan Development Board which administered the scheme. The cotton crop was ginned in the Delta and much sought after in Liverpool and other markets owing to the exceptional length of its staple.

One reaches Zinjibar by motoring eastwards from Aden along the seashore for about an hour. This is best done when the tide is low enough to leave firm sands for driving on: the process is much slower at high water, when only soft sand is left. Hence the copy of the 'Indian Ocean Tide Tables' which forms such a surprising part of the motorist's equipment in this part of the Protectorate.

The effective head of the State was the *Naib* or deputy ruler. I found Naib Ahmed (who was also Minister of Agriculture and Economic Development in the Federal Government) a man of ability and determination, downright in manner, cynical, and something of a leg-puller and *farceur*. His cousin, the nominal ruler, Sultan Abdulla, was head of the rival branch of the ruling family. The Sultan was a vague and eccentric character who lived for sea-fishing. Three or four years before, in the course of an unsuccessful struggle for power with Naib Ahmed, the Sultan had turned to Mohammed Ali Al Jifri and the extreme nationalist faction for support, while Naib Ahmed had stayed resolutely on

the British side throughout and was one of the original authors of the Federation.

Compared with the formality of Lahej, Zinjibar was a riot. As we approached, after leaving the beach and passing through a belt of sand-dunes and salt-pans, the road was hung with inscriptions welcoming the Wali [Governor] of Aden, and there were even one or two of those rustic arches known in Arabic, by a charming plural-formation, as *fantasiāt*. The main square of Zinjibar makes the one in Lahej look like the Place de la Concorde by comparison: it is a bumpy, irregular expanse of sand, and in the middle of it, as we arrived, a calf was being ceremoniously butchered in sign of welcome. The Naib and the fisherman-Sultan appeared together to greet us. The Sultan, bearded, nautical, wearing formal dress except for bare legs thrust into an old pair of shoes, as if he might have to push his launch off the beach at any moment, was full of charm – the Arab equivalent of an eccentric peer from a play by William Douglas-Home. A mass of brilliantly coloured notables drawn up just beyond us were discharging their firing-pieces into the air, a gentleman on horseback rode round the square doing the same from the saddle, followed by three racing camels trotting in faultless line abreast – a troika, perhaps intended by way of compliment to my wife's Russian origin?

Afterwards there was a meeting with the local State Council, and much complimenting, and arguing about who was honouring whom, and calling down of Allah's blessings, and drinking of a local soft drink called *Stim* out of a bottle through a straw. Meanwhile, just to keep up my luck-bringing reputation, a brace of boy twins was being born in the local hospital.

From this atmosphere of jollity we drove the short distance to Ja'ar, the capital of the adjoining Lower Yafai State, which shares the rich Abyan Delta with the Fadhli. We were met at the border post by the boy-Sultan, Mahmud, and his grim-looking Deputy, Naib Haidara Mansur, and it became clear at once that we had moved from the world of comedy into that of serious business. The Lower Yafai State was divided between those loyal to little Sultan Mahmud and the British connection, and the supporters of his elder brother, Mahommed Aidrus, the nationalist rebel

leader. Mahommed Aidrus, a man of courage and some ability, had been in charge of the State for some years as Deputy ruler; he had, however, shown himself so overbearing, particularly in his dealings with the cultivators of the Abyan Delta, that ultimately the place had become too small to hold him; he had declared himself in sympathy with the extreme nationalists and decamped to the mountainous interior of the State, where he was still holding out in defiance of State and Federal authority.

Perhaps it was the thought of his brother hiding in the mountains; perhaps it was the heavy dagger of office in his belt; perhaps it was just the prospect of going to school at Bradfield in two or three years' time – anyway, the boy-Sultan looked weighed down and thoughtful.

The word Ja'ar means hyena, and the thriving little capital is so-called because only a few years ago no one except hyenas lived on its site. It is in fact a triumph for British pacification and economic development that this wild area should so quickly have been brought to order and a reasonable degree of prosperity.

I found a fair-sized European community in the Ja'ar area – British staff of the Abyan Development Board and the Agricultural Research Station, Italian and Greek engineers from the cotton ginnery, British Officers of the Aden Protectorate Levies. The little Sultan gave an Arab-style lunch in our honour, for which we removed our shoes and sat cross-legged around the wall. The European ladies present wore hats and gloves and bare feet, which seems to be the recognized formal dress for these occasions.

After a round of visits to schools, offices and law courts, we returned to Zinjibar for a farewell party in the shade of a fantastic banana garden, one of many which have been created out of the desert by newly bored wells. The scene would have been really more like Jamaica than Arabia, if it had not been for the pipe-band of the Federal Guard, in white tunics, green kilts, and black turbans, half hidden under the banana leaves as it played 'The Barren Rocks of Aden'.

The threat of high tide to our line of communication made us reluctantly remove ourselves from this exotic gathering. We said good-bye to our joint hosts, the fisherman- and the boy-Sultans

with their two determined-looking Naibs, and were soon bowling along the beach while the sun set behind the peaks of Aden and, in a frenzy to work the tide, the last outward-bound lorries of the day roared past us in the opposite direction.

Lahej and Abyan are Aden's two nearest neighbours, and can be visited from it during the day. My next trip was to the interior of the Western Protectorate, to the Audhali Sultanate and the Republic of Dathina.

The Audhalis live on a critical sector of the Yemeni frontier and have in the past suffered grievously from Imamic aggression. They are the *braves Belges* of the Protectorate. Their fate between the two World Wars closely reflected the power relationships in the area. Having observed Britain's failure to save the western districts of the Protectorate from Turkish occupation during the First War, the Imam of the Yemen took the opportunity, as soon as he was freed from Turkish occupation himself, to extend his authority into the Audhali country. He occupied the plateau adjoining the Yemeni frontier post of Beidha in 1924, and Zara in the Audhali lowlands in 1926. The tables were however soon afterwards turned in Aden's favour by the development of air power and the conversion of Aden into a Royal Air Force base. In 1933 the threat of British air action, combined with the worsening of his relations with Ibn Saud, forced the Imam to withdraw again from the Audhali Sultanate, and in 1934 this withdrawal was formalized in the Treaty of San'a. The Treaty did not, however, restore peace to the area. In 1938 the present Audhali Sultan's father Hussein was killed repelling Yemeni raiders on the frontier.

Despite, or because of, this chequered history, Sultan Saleh bin Hussein has been one of the strongest supporters of the British connection. Having spent his childhood in hiding to prevent capture by the Yemenis, and having lost his father at their hands, he realized early in life the consequences of a further Yemeni occupation of his own State.

A close friendship with Sir Tom Hickinbotham, Governor of Aden in the early fifties, had a good deal of influence on the

Sultan's development. With British support he came successfully through a tense period during 1956 and 1957, in which he repelled a Yemeni offensive of subversion against his State and more than repaid the Imamic Government in its own coin.

The airstrip at Mukeiras, on the Audhali plateau, is only thirty-five minutes from Aden by air. We were welcomed on arrival by the Sultan and his brother, Naib Ja'bil. Squat, thickset, with a round face, high cheekbones and a small flat turban like a soufflé placed square on the top of his head, Sultan Saleh has a slightly withdrawn, Far Eastern look about him. He is a man of remarkable calm, stability of judgement and scrupulousness of personal behaviour. Among the British advisory staff he is known privately as 'the Wykehamist'. He has indeed shown a degree of principle, honesty and straightforwardness rarely encountered among Arabs – or, indeed, among Wykehamists either, if I may add this without disloyalty to my old school. His brother, Naib Ja'bil, who is his viceroy for the Mukeiras plateau and the Yemeni frontier, is a prince of very different type. Known to his British friends as 'the Choirboy', he has an angelic air of youth and innocence combined with a strong taste for devilry which he has been known to gratify to some effect when provoked to it by aggression from over the border.

The day's programme was decidedly hard on the eardrums. First, in the main square of Mukeiras, we received the traditional salute of the mountain tribes, delivered with a kind of shambling violence which made a deep impression. A long procession of tribesmen walking two by two, headed by choirboy Ja'bil and looking like a prep. school out for its Sunday walk in crocodile, began snaking slowly across the square towards us, then turning away, and then approaching again. Eventually, while passing right in front of us about six inches away, the tribesmen removed their rifles from the shoulder and discharged them into the air. A drum was beating out an excited rhythm, two bare-footed dancers with daggers were circling in front of the column, and every now and then there was an outburst of tribal whooping which would not have been out of place at a Highland ball. There were riflemen in kilts and turbans with a sprig of lavender stuck in the back to

sweeten the air; others in inky woad and little else; and among them, portly and prosperous in a bush shirt, a former chauffeur to Sir Tom Hickinbotham.

No sooner had our ears recovered from the discharge of five hundred tribal Lee-Enfields than they had to face a different test, a descent of 3,500 feet in six miles over the new Thira Pass road linking the plateau with the remainder of the Audhali State below. This road, in fact a narrow track negotiable only by landrovers, had been paid for by the British Government, and represented a triumph for the Aden Public Works Department engineers concerned in it. It would be a decided economic asset to the Sultanate, particularly if funds allowed later on for its widening to take lorry traffic.

After looking out from a protruding rock straight down to the flat floor of the Lodar plain, dotted with detail as minute as if seen from an aircraft, we said an entirely serious prayer to Allah the merciful and compassionate and, commending ourselves equally to him and to the *bureikāt* (brakes) of our *landroverāt*, began the descent. Our convoy negotiated it successfully, although some of the hairpin bends, where one had to reverse and manoeuvre within inches of an entirely unguarded precipice, called for strong nerves and renewed invocations of Allah which had nothing formal about them at all. On arrival at the bottom, our eardrums popping from the descent, we had to withstand another tribal fusillade, this time in the main square of Zara. We spent the night in the palace of Sultan Saleh there – in effect a comfortable farmhouse with ravishing views over cultivated country, and green gardens of orange, tangerine and pawpaw, to the black mountain wall leading, as in Jack-and-the-Beanstalk, up to the plateau above.

I must say in frankness that the tribal receptions and fusillades although impressive had no great air of spontaneity. The tribesmen who chanted in chorus: 'Long life to the Wali[1] and the Sultan of the Country!' or 'Long life to the Sultan who has brought the Wali and the Agent in an aeroplane!' had in the background a cheer-leader to prompt them and remind them of their lines.

There was, however, nothing artificial about the warmth with

[1] Governor.

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which Sultan Saleh himself was greeted by his subjects; there was a general rush to kiss his hand or his knee. Walking with the Sultan through the town gave one the impression of what it must have been like to stroll with an eighteenth century Duke of Argyll through the *suqs* of Inveraray.

The next day we drove eastward across the plain to visit the Dathina Confederation. This is a loose grouping of tribes situated between the Audhalis, the Aulaqis and the Fadhlis; impossible to assign to any one of these Sultanates, without mortally offending the other two; and therefore maintained as a sort of rustic republic under a State Council, the chairmanship of which rotates annually between the main tribes of the area. Dathina was developed by the Aden Government during the Second World War as a fertile area which, like Abyan, could be used to grow foodstuffs and thus ease the strain on shipping. Like Abyan it had now largely switched to cotton, but was also more or less self-supporting in cereals and fruit. As a result of its curious political framework, Dathina at that time was more directly administered by us than other parts of the Western Protectorate – 'us' in this case meaning in the first instance a fierce-looking turbaned Aulaqi named Hussein Nasir Busi who filled the post of Junior Assistant Adviser, lowest in the scale of political officers in the Protectorate, with great firmness and efficiency.

After lunching with the rural senators in the shade of a delightful pawpaw garden, I drove back to Lodar airstrip, said good-bye to the Wykehamist Sultan and his choirboy brother, and in half an hour or so was back in the steamy haze of Aden – feeling, whilst the car took me home between modernistic apartment houses and Parsee emporia, as if I had just dropped in from a completely different planet.

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CHAPTER 5

A drive round Aden Colony

The duality of the Governor's job was one of its main difficulties, but also one of its main attractions.

It was a constant struggle to be fair to the interests of both the Colony and the Protectorate, including the highly vocal and well-organized Federation. It was necessary not only to be fair, but to be seen to be fair by both the interested parties.

At the same time the Governor's two 'hats' gave his life a variety which was infinitely agreeable. As soon as the Colony and its problems, circumscribed by their narrow horizon of black volcanic rock, began to loom too claustrophobically around Government House, he could escape for a tour in the Protectorate. Similarly, when the rough conditions of travel in the interior began to lose their appeal, he could return rapidly to the comforts of the metropolis. This constant commuting between the two different worlds enabled one to see each of them afresh every time, in all its strangeness.

For Aden too is a very odd and exciting place. It has none of the banality usually associated with the great international trading centres of the world. The best way of taking a look at it will be to make a tour of the Colony by car, starting at about five in the afternoon of a delicious, cool, sunny winter's day. We have got the big black car with the flag on the bonnet, and as we drive out of the main gate a guard of honour of the Armed Police presents arms and a salute is played on the bugle. The Aden Armed Police are a corps d'élite, some hundreds strong; they are under the Police Commissioner's command, but are quite separate from the Colony's Civil Police. They have various para-military tasks to discharge, like guarding Government House and garrisoning the

Government House towers up on a hill commanding the entrance to the harbour

Clumps of white oleander stood out against a dark blue, wind-puckered sea dotted with white sails – the simple, classic colour-scheme of happiness

Early morning mists at Dhala

The city of Crater, the original Aden, in th
heart of the main volcano of the Peninsul

outlying islands of Perim and Kamaran. They wear an extremely smart uniform of khaki topped by a scarlet Punjabi turban, with the loose end sticking out above like a coxcomb. This get-up was designed during Aden's Indian days, and its military elegance has a Kiplingesque cachet.

Immediately below us on the right is the beach of the Officer's Club at Tarshyne, with bathers sporting inside the shark-net. These nets are a real necessity in Aden – it was on the same stretch of beach that two or three years earlier the wife of an R.A.F. officer was attacked by a shark in shallow water and died of her injuries. On the point beyond, arranged in tiers one above the other, the houses of the three Service Commanders – Commander -in-Chief, G.O.C. and A.O.C. – are concealed in clumps of trees and greenery. Further on are brown playing-fields of sand where hockey and football are in progress; on the hill above, hospitals, messes, and headquarter buildings rise in one layer after another, capped by the Aden Port Trust signal station on a peak towering above the whole scene. To the left, on a headland at the entrance to the harbour, the former coast defence battery of Fort Morbut is now used for nothing more lethal than the firing of salutes on Royal Birthdays, and when Treaty Rulers visit Government House.

Suddenly we are out of the military enclave, and into the swarming tourist area of Steamer Point – a charmingly appropriate name; the early Victorian vulgarism 'steamer' assorts particularly well with Aden's bustling, Dickensian vitality. A towering P. and O. is lying a hundred yards or so out in the stream, and shirt-sleeved passengers, who have just come ashore by launch, hold us up as they pour across the road to visit the Indian and Jewish shops of the Crescent area in search of Japanese transistors, field glasses, cameras and other products which, owing to Aden's free-port status, are of astonishing cheapness here. Having travelled to my first post, Japan, by P. and O. just before the war, it strikes me how greatly the appearance of the Company's passengers has changed. Then it was British India which set the tone, and there was a prevalent atmosphere of starched evening shirts and bristly moustaches. Now that is all gone into thin air; Australia has

taken over, and the general impression is of shirt-sleeves, braces, and the loping stride of the Outback.

The car drives on, past the Secretariat, an antique, rambling construction of Indian type, like a two-storey bungalow with wide eaves and dingy green woodwork. Above us at the top of a steep slope is a Westminster-Gothic tower supporting an enormous clockface – a sort of Big-Ben-on-the Hill – which is the distinctive feature and trademark of Aden. Soon we are in Maalla, driving down the so-called Straight, a mile-long stretch of dual carriageway with, on either side of it, a solid cliff of six-storey apartment buildings under construction. Much of this is already completed, and when the whole job is finished Aden will have a sort of triumphal way which will be unique among the modern cities of the Arab world. While the town planning authorities have insisted on uniformity of height, local private enterprise has varied the façades of the houses, and the special colour sense of South Arabia has inspired a gay and light-hearted variegation of hue which, with its uninhibited combination of blues and greens, produces an exotic and entirely appropriate effect. Some of the buildings are propped on stilts, so that the ground floor is free as a parking space; others have new shopfronts abutting on the pavement; around these a cheerful multiracial crowd is buzzing – English sergeants with their wives and children doing the day's shopping, open-air cafés in the side-streets full-up with Arab and Somali workers who are waiting to attend a meeting later this evening in the Trades Union Congress Compound near by. The whole thing could not be more amicable or relaxed.

At the same time there is no mingling between the races. The British sergeant's wife has been buying breakfast cereals for the family. The Somali worker who watches her so phlegmatically is lying on a charpoy, a sort of open-air bed, with his legs curled up under him, and his jaw working rhythmically. For the daily *qat* supply has just been distributed. The leaves of this privet-like plant are picked early in the morning on the Ethiopian highlands and flown to Aden. From the airport they are rushed to a distribution centre and from there the various dealers, having obtained their daily allocations, drive to their seats of business at breakneck

speed so as not to keep the addict waiting a moment longer than is necessary. The weed must be chewed fresh. It is not medically harmful, so far as can be ascertained, although if taken in excess it lowers the appetite and produces a characteristic green-faced, cadaverous appearance. It is habit-forming, and the worst thing about the addiction is its economic and social effect. A worker is quite capable of spending on *qat* ten shillings per day – about half his total wage. Financially speaking, the *qat* trade has its benefits both for the Aden Government, who levy a substantial Customs duty on its importation, and for Aden Airways, whose profitability depends very largely on the daily *qat* run from Ethiopia. From a wider point of view, however, the traffic is pure loss. About £1,500,000 per year is paid to Ethiopia in respect of *qat*, and none of this is seen again either by Aden or the Protectorate or the United Kingdom. So far as reciprocal trade goes, it is money thrown down the drain. The habit is, however, well dug-in. An attempt made to stop it in my predecessor's time ended in utter failure. Personally I came to regard it as a necessary evil, but hoped to mitigate the economic disadvantages of it by switching the source of supply as far as possible away from Ethiopia to the Yemen, which would at least spend most of the proceeds in Aden.

Soon we are zigzagging up the volcanic mountainside and ahead of us looms the archway spanning the road at the Main Pass – an Aden landmark later to be destroyed when the dual carriageway would be driven through the rock. We are under it, and ahead we look down on the old city of Crater, the original Aden, situated as its name implies in the heart of the main volcano of the Peninsula, with blue sea showing above the other lip beyond. Indian merchant families, the women in saris, the men in their white jodhpur-ish get-up, are taking the air, immaculate after the siesta. We drive round a market square with fruit glowing on the stalls, and enter a narrow street fairly buzzing with exotic life – pastrycooks, water-sellers, coffee-makers, carpet merchants, all the usual figures of the Oriental bazaar – and pervading the whole thing a strong hot smell of spice. In this babel the races are most easily told apart by their headgear: the Adenese in his jaunty white skull-cap; the Protectorate tribesman in his brilliantly

coloured turban; the Yemeni in his embroidered pillbox or – speciality of the Shafei tribes of the Tihama seaboard – an extraordinarily narrow, high tarboosh like a sawn-off dunce; the Indian Muslim in his black forage cap; and the Shell Company's representative in a brown felt porkpie.

We thread our way out again, past the nineteenth-century ecclesiastical enchantments of the Legislative Council Chamber on its hill, and out of Crater along the Marine Drive. Behind us, like a vast brown railway terminus, is the Sultan of Lahej's town palace, formerly an Indian Army Officers' Mess, built on the beach where Captain Haines landed with a few hundred Indian troops in 1839 and captured the original city of Aden for Queen Victoria – the first new jewel in her crown.

It is high tide, and the sea is breaking on the rocks below the sidewalk. Away to the right the beach stretches out into the haze, beckoning, as always, with its feeling of space and release into the wider air of the Protectorate. Ahead of us the Aden Government's social services are well represented: a big new complex of modernistic buildings will soon house a boys' secondary school; the monumental white blocks beyond are the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which provides free medical attention not only for Aden but for most of the Southern Yemen as well; beyond that, the Girls' College, a spearhead of women's education in this highly conservative part of the Muslim world.

We turn to the left and are soon on the causeway. Across the lagoon lies another important British military area, with Khormaksar airfield, the barracks of the infantry battalion stationed in Aden for internal security purposes, a large quarter of new white houses for Army and R.A.F. staff, and away behind the airfield the headquarters of the Federal Guard and of the Aden Protectorate Levies.

Beyond the salt-pans another township looms ahead of us: the suburb of Sheikh Othman, where most of Aden's Yemeni immigrants live. 'Sheikh' is traditionally the starting-place for disturbance and civil commotion in Aden; but as we drive through it the jostling crowds are peaceable, and there are tourists inspecting the potters' wares which are the main local speciality. On the

frontier with Lahej is a long building surrounded by various lesser ones, with playing-fields and gardens; this is Aden College, the main boys' secondary school, and the most advanced educational centre in the area.

Driving out of Sheikh Othman we are soon on the coastal road which goes round the bay to Little Aden. Half-way along, with a splendid view of both peninsulas and of the open sea between, the Federation's new capital city of Al Ittihad is rising fast. The central Government building or Secretariat is just about ready, with a flight of steps and an imposing façade of arches covering two storeys. On one side of it the British Agency rises, on the other side houses are already completed and waiting for Federal Ministers and senior officials to move in. The whole place is dusty and arid-looking still, but there are great plans for gardening and tree-planting as soon as the water supply is connected. A gaily painted shanty settlement near by houses the labourers, mainly Yemeni, who are engaged on the construction.

In the open country beyond are the wireless masts over which the Cable and Wireless Company conduct Aden's communications with the outside world; in the same area the Services will soon have their main communications centre, with a forest of aerials guarded behind a well-lit perimeter. As the Little Aden Peninsula comes up out of the haze, we can see the oil port with two big tankers lying alongside; the flattened silver cylinders of the tank farms; the quarters of the oil company's Arab staff, complete with mosque; the refinery itself, with the tall stacks of the generator and the tower of the platformer. Next, there are the quarters of our strategic reserve, units ready to move at short notice to any emergency between Kuwait and Swaziland: a Marine Commando, an armoured car Regiment, and, encamped on the other side of the Little Aden Peninsula, the headquarters of a tank Regiment which keeps detached squadrons in the Persian Gulf and Hongkong. We get to it after a drive through the mysterious lunar landscape of Silent Valley and under the towering peaks of the Cathedral Rock. Beyond, where the road and the Colony end, is a heavenly beach frequented by oyster-catchers, avocets, and whimbrels – and by an occasional camel or landrover

plodding across the sand to the little Laheji fishing port of Ras Imran, on the next peninsula. The whole of this part of the South Arabian coast consists of a chain of extinct volcanoes: Aden itself; Little Aden; Ras Imran; Jebel Kharaz, Mount Bradawl, a rock formation of penetrating sharpness; and finally Perim.

There is no place in the world where the gap between reputation and reality is so wide as in Aden. It got its bad name initially from travellers who visited it on the sea journey eastwards – a few hours spent ashore in the hot and smelly streets of the Crescent, with no interesting sights to see, nowhere agreeable to go, and nothing to do except spend money in the shops.

Europeans who have lived in Aden on the other hand go to the opposite extreme. They keep an extraordinary feeling of affection for the place. There is in London an Aden Dinner Club which meets yearly in great force, simply to maintain contact between past and present members of the foreign community there – an institution which does not exist in the case of many apparently more agreeable territories that have belonged to our Empire in the past. Part of this emotional attitude towards Aden is due to a natural element of pride at having overcome the obvious challenge presented by its climate. Nevertheless, there is something more to it than that. Aden is a place where relationships inside the European community and outside it have traditionally been happy. The British fighting Services have got on with each other and with the civil authority; the Government has got on with the trading community; and the Europeans as a whole have got on with the Arabs and the other peoples of Aden. Only, alas, in the relationship between the Arabs and the Hindu minority are signs to be discerned of those racial feelings with which we are so regrettably familiar in other parts of the world.

The Aden climate is a legend, a typical piece of travel-reporting fabricated by passengers who have come ashore for the afternoon, or other transients. In fact, for four months, November, December, January and February, Aden has the best winter climate in the world. The temperature remains in the seventies, and it is exceptional ever to need to move from a palm beach suit to a grey flannel one. The sea is just the right temperature for bathing,

and the evenings are delightful for dining and sitting out under the brilliant Arabian stars. There are no insects to plague one, and very little risk of unexpected rain. The total rainfall of Aden is only two inches per year, most of which usually falls in one or two isolated downpours in the middle of the night. October, March and April are warmish, but not disagreeable. It is the months from May to September which really provide the test. But with modern air conditioning and refrigeration this is no longer too severe; and as the interior of the country is developed the now rather limited hotel facilities in cool mountain spots like Dhala and Mukeiras will certainly be extended and will become more easily accessible. Personally I played tennis thoughout the summer while I was in Aden and found this perfectly possible; one started at about quarter to five and went on until the early darkness cut the proceedings short as it does about six o'clock.

It will be some time yet before Aden lives down its unjustly acquired reputation – Kipling's 'unlit barrick stove'; Curzon's punishment station for British regiments which had misbehaved in India; the dumping ground, even as late as between the wars, to which regiments sent officers who had got themselves into matrimonial difficulties.

One of South Arabia's best assets is its attraction from the touristic point of view which, if properly developed, could help it greatly on the road to economic independence. But, before this possibility can be fully exploited, Aden's bad name must be destroyed. Destroyed it will be in time, that is certain, for truth is great and will prevail. The process can, however, be accelerated if only the reading public in Britain can be allowed to see the place as it really is. It is up to those who love it, as I do, to try to write about it objectively, so that the reader can judge of it for himself.

CHAPTER 6

The start of the merger talks

While we waited for London's reaction to our constitutional proposals, I took every opportunity of studying the leading local personalities and getting to know them better.

I had no regular meetings with the Federal Ministers, but my tours in their home States were bringing me into close and informal touch with them. I saw the Aden Ministers every week at the meetings of the Colony's Executive Council held on Saturday mornings in my office. Their personalities were beginning to emerge distinctly in my mind.

Hassan Bayoomi, the Minister for Labour, stood out from the group in terms of experience and personal quality. During the few months before my arrival it had fallen to him to steer through the Legislative Council the Industrial Relations Ordinance which Sir William Luce and he had decided to introduce in order to curb the political strikes then paralysing Aden's economy. This Ordinance made it illegal to strike until certain processes of conciliation had been properly exhausted, and established an Industrial Court to settle disputes in the labour field. It was abundantly justified in the outcome. It abruptly cut short the epidemic of political strikes and induced a long period of industrial peace. The Ordinance had been much criticized as a reactionary piece of legislation, but in fact it was closely paralleled by measures in existence in other parts of the non-Communist world, including Australia.

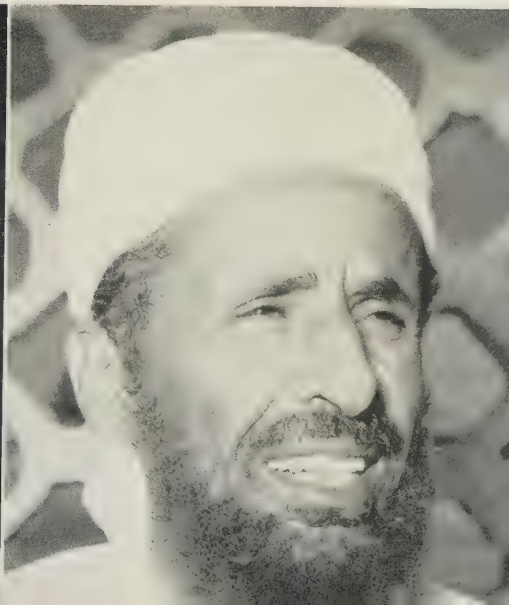
Even with the Ordinance, the industrial situation in Aden was notably more liberal than anywhere else in the Arab world. Such legislation would have been quite out of place in most of the independent Arab countries, not because it was reactionary, but

Sultan Fadhl bin Ali is a man of distinction and wears an Indo-Arab get-up of simple elegance

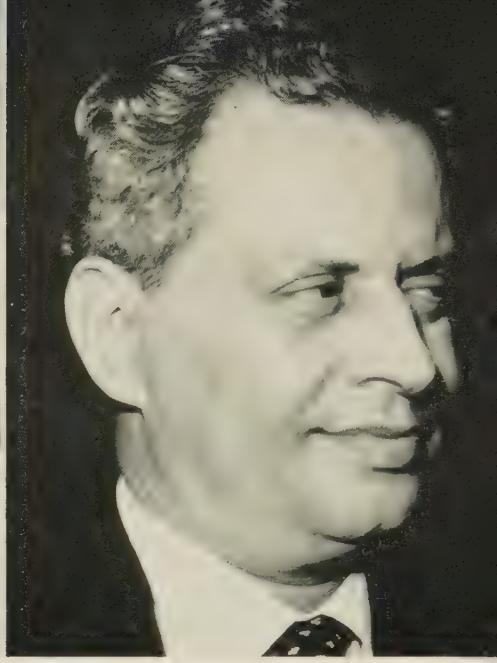
With a round face, high cheek-bones and a small flat turban like a soufflé placed square on the top of his head, Sultan Saleh has a slightly withdrawn, Far Eastern look about him

I found Naib Ahmed a man of ability and determination, downright in manner, cynical, and something of a leg-puller and *farceur*

With his striking and dominating personality Sherif Hussein lives in a world of storm and drama



Mohammed Farid, an efficient young Minister, well able to find his way around Whitehall – yet still keeping his roots in patriarchal Aulaqi soil



Hassan Bayoomi had a bit the look of a swarthy Roman emperor

Abdulla Saidi was a massive man with a big head and a jolly, thick-lipped face

Zein Baharoon looks searchingly at the world from behind thick lenses

because trades unions do not exist there, or, if they do, the Government would never dream of allowing them the right to strike in any circumstances, no matter what processes had been completed.

In the political storm which attended the introduction of the Industrial Relations Ordinance, Bayoomi had proved both his ability and his courage. He was plainly cut out to be Aden's first Chief Minister whenever constitutional advance might come.

He had a fine head, with a wiry mane of grey hair, a bit the look of a swarthy Roman emperor, Philip the Arab perhaps – only his teeth had been ruined by chewing *qat*. His eyes, almost permanently narrowed by cigarette smoke, were shrewd, disillusioned, and quick to light up with amusement at the first hint of political intrigue. He came of a poorish middle-class family, believed to have originated in Egypt, but long settled in Crater and deeply involved in its parochial but extremely bitter community life. Hassan had the quick temper and the rough tongue that go with this sort of milieu. 'You're a rotten intriguing bastard', he told one of my senior English advisers, who incidentally was and remained his close friend. Bayoomi's fluent English had the Indo-Arab lilt which is characteristic of Aden. 'O Inspector,' says one of the locally prepared English-into-Arabic phrasebooks, then gives the vernacular equivalent: 'Ya Inspeiktar.' Phonetically it is like an over-conscientious imitation of a certain exaggerated and blimpish type of English accent. In the same way, Hassan, talking for example about a letter, would always speak of it as a 'leitar'. This kind of enunciation produced in my mind a curious Indian-lawyer effect quite out of keeping with Bayoomi's real character.

He had come into politics via the Government service. As Junior Assistant Adviser in the Western Protectorate, he had not only got an insight into administrative problems, but had also won the friendship and confidence of several leading Federal Ministers. He was the Federation's favourite among the Aden politicians, and would be the natural leader of the federalist party in Aden when it came into being.

Essentially Bayoomi was a man of principle. He had a passion for justice which, in a politician closely in touch with his people,

quite naturally took the form of striving to get better conditions for his fellow Adenis. He was, in fact, the paladin of Adenese nationalism; the Aden-born, the sons of the soil – more accurately, of the asphalt – must be given preference over all the minorities, whether Yemeni, Hindu or Somali, when it came to employment, allocation of land, special facilities of any type, and most particularly the right to vote.

The other one who stood out among the Adenese Ministers was Abdulla Saidi. As the Member-in-Charge for Education, he had visited Amman the year before – while I was under orders for Aden but not yet allowed to reveal the fact – to recruit Jordanian schoolteachers for Aden. I had put myself out to help him in every possible way and brought him into contact with Hazza Majali, the Prime Minister, and other leading people there. Saidi had guessed that I would be coming to Aden, and ever since we had had a friendly and rather jocular relationship dating back to this episode. Abdulla was also a product of Crater, but one or two notches lower down the scale than Bayoomi. His forebears were supposed to have come from Egypt some time back, and this was borne out by his appearance: a massive man with a big head and a jolly thick-lipped face almost permanently dripping with sweat, he would not have looked out of place beneath a pasha's tarboosh. He had worked his way into the political scene after a career in which he had made full use of his great physical strength, including a spell as a docker in Cardiff. Politically Saidi stood rather to the left of Bayoomi. No less of an Adenese nationalist, he had a much better relationship than Bayoomi with the Aden T.U.C. and was on good personal terms with its leader, Abdulla Al Asnag. Saidi's closest political affiliations were with the People's Constitutional Congress, a small political party run by the Luqman family, the main group of intellectuals in Aden. The distinctive feature of the Luqmans' attitude at that time was their dislike and suspicion of the Federal Government and their determination that Aden should never join the Federation. They were a small group, but had an effect on public opinion out of proportion to their size, owing to the newspapers which the family owned and edited between them. One of Aden's two English-language

weeklies and two of its half-dozen or so Arabic dailies were in their hands.

Saidi, a poor man with a large family, was generous to the point of rashness in money matters. He was also, from geniality and gregariousness, an overt drinker of alcohol – something rare among the strict Muslims of South Arabia. Despite this habit his extrovert jollity and obvious goodness of heart made him a popular figure.

The most eloquent and effective speaker in the Legislative Council was V. K. Joshi, the Minister for Works and Aviation, a Hindu lawyer who had lived in Aden for many years and acquired a successful practice at the local bar. I found Joshi a man of high intelligence and character with a stern devotion to principle in general and to democratic principle in particular; a strong admirer of the Anglo-Saxon way of life, he was quick to criticize us if he thought we were failing to live up to his own exacting conception of what we ought to stand for. In our discussions in the Executive Council he proved a skilful controversialist but open to argument and, once convinced, loyal in support of a collective decision. Under his vigorous direction the Governmental side of Aden's building boom was forging ahead in a manner which did him and the Public Works Department great credit.

Joshi's relations with Bayoomi were disturbed by the anti-Hindu aspect of Bayoomi's intense Adenese nationalism. Although the two men respected each other's qualities, they were not on close personal terms. Most of the time Joshi felt himself rather isolated in the midst of his four Arab colleagues. He had been elected to the Legislative Council by a predominantly Arab constituency, but it was natural that as the only Hindu in the Council he should come to be regarded as the Hindu community's unofficial spokesman. That community was careful to keep out of politics but, being mainly composed of merchants and shopkeepers, could be expected to back Aden's entry into the Federation, if once convinced that that would be to the Colony's economic advantage.

Abdulla Basendwa, the Minister in charge of the Medical Department, belonged to one of those Hadhrami merchant

families from the Eastern Protectorate who provide the aristocracy of Aden. Not a rich man himself, he was predominantly conservative in outlook and on good personal terms with the Federal Ministers. It was likely that, on the question of Aden's entry into the Federation, he would be with Bayoomi in the Federalist camp.

Ali Salem Ali, the Minister responsible for Posts, Telephones and Electricity, was in close touch with the Aden T.U.C. through his brother, Mohammed Salem, one of its fieriest and most strongly nationalist leaders. The two brothers were the sons of a self-made Adenese capitalist who owned and operated the biggest bus company in the Colony. Ali himself was the furthest to the left of our Ministers, and his attitude towards the entry of Aden into the Federation was unpredictable.

I soon made the acquaintance of another leading character in the Aden drama, Abdulla Al Asnag, the youthful Secretary-General of the Aden T.U.C. and the leading spirit in the nationalist movement. He came of a family long established in Crater, and his father, an Inspector in the Government Health Service, had been a well-known Adeni poet. Asnag himself was an employee of Aden Airways and ran their booking office with effortless efficiency. At a time when he was doing his best in his Aden T.U.C. capacity to prevent my predecessor, Bill Luce, from introducing the Industrial Relations Ordinance, Asnag was at the same time writing to him in his other capacity to tell him that his air passage had duly been arranged and that he was, as always, at His Excellency's service. A shortish man in his late twenties, with a big head and protuberant, hypnotic eyes, Asnag was a compelling speaker and a shrewd tactician. I recognized his success in keeping the heterogeneous Aden T.U.C. team in some sort of line, and in refusing to allow himself to be outflanked from the left. Unfortunately, in the process his natural common sense came off worst and he tended to lose contact with realities.

I did all I could to convince him that he would best serve Aden by making his effort within the constitutional framework rather than outside it. If he and his friends disliked the Ministers, there were legal means by which they could be fought. Asnag listened

with impassive politeness, and paid not the slightest alteration in practice. Here, potentially, was a dangerous opponent.

Under the pressure of our election deadline, things were now beginning to move. The Secretary of State for the Colonies visited Aden in April 1961 and had talks with both Federal and Colony Ministers. He also met the Federal Council and the Legislative Council of the Colony. These discussions, and further ones which I had with him in London in May, satisfied Mr. Macleod that the right course was action on the general lines which we had proposed.

The Federal Ministers, accompanied by Ken Trevaskis, were accordingly invited to London in June for talks with the Secretary of State, and in July the Aden Ministers and I flew home to join the party. It was a notable diplomatic success when Mr. Macleod was able to convince the Federal Ministers that they must accept constitutional advance in Aden as the first step towards a merger, and the Aden Ministers, that constitutional advance in the Colony should be so designed as to facilitate a merger on terms to be agreed. Both groups of Ministers and I were to return to Aden and there hold discussions, aimed at reaching agreement on the conditions of Aden's entry into the Federation in respect of constitutional, administrative and financial matters; on a form of constitutional advance in Aden 'to facilitate the implementation of this agreement'; and on the timing of Aden's entry into the Federation. The aim was to conclude the talks in Aden by the end of October at the latest, so that a further conference could be held under the Colonial Secretary's chairmanship before the end of the year to endorse the conclusions reached and to take final decisions.

The talks started in my office in August in a mood of some enthusiasm. I sat, flanked by my English advisers, at a long table facing out to sea through the windows. At another table adjoining us to the left sat the Aden Ministers in their business suits; opposite them, to the right, were the Federal Ministers in oriental robes and turbans of every different shape and size. It was a confrontation of two worlds which had never before been brought into regular contact with each other.

We lost no time in setting up joint Federal/Aden working groups to consider the implications of merger in all the special fields which, under the existing Federation, had been handed over by the States to the central Government – for example, Health, Education and Public Works. The difficulties of the task, which immediately became apparent, were stimulating but very soon brought it home to us that the October date was much too optimistic. While the Federal Ministers spoke as a united team, the Aden Ministers divided almost at once into two camps, one disposed to press ahead with merger, and the other to emphasize its difficulties. In addition to the problem of finding a solution acceptable to the Aden Ministers as a whole, there was also the extreme technical complication of many of the special aspects of merger: in particular those relating to finance, and to the Public Service. It soon became plain to all of us that we would not be able to put forward any recommendations on these two items without expert advice from outside Aden.

Politically speaking the hottest of all the potatoes which we would have to handle in the negotiations was the question of how many Ministers Aden should have in the Cabinet of the future Federation, and how many representatives it should have in the Federal legislature. Despite its apparently technical nature, this was the issue which crystallized the most controversial problem of all: was Aden to join the Federation as an equal, or just as one more component State, or what? My guess was that two, perhaps three, of the Aden Ministers were preparing to resign if satisfaction could not be given to their views on it – views which would, however, certainly never find acceptance on the Federal side. It was therefore necessary for us to skirt round this highly political issue and keep the talks for the present in a low technical key. If resignations had to come, I was determined that they should come as late as possible, and after full agreement had been reached on as much as possible of the rest of the ground. I reckoned that, the closer we were to a general agreement, the more momentum the cause of merger would have gained, and the less power would individual ministerial resignations have to stop it.

As it turned out, extraneous factors eased my task. At the end

of October Ali Salem resigned on private grounds; his father was ill, and Ali wished to devote himself full-time to the family business. While this reason for his resignation was perfectly genuine, it was probably reinforced by his lack of sympathy for the type of merger which was beginning to loom up in our talks; indeed, in the Legislative Council debate the following year, he would vote against the agreement reached. In his place I appointed Mohammed Husseiny, a public-spirited self-made businessman and educationalist from the Sheikh Othman quarter. Husseiny, whose family had come to Aden from the Yemen only a generation back, was an elected member of the Legislative Council, popular, influential and, at that time, open-minded about merger.

Public opinion in Aden had got a pretty accurate idea of what was going on at the talks, and seemed increasingly to accept the prospect of joining the Federation. Unfortunately, though, it remained true that as always in Arabian politics there were two levels of operation: the rational and irrational. On the rational plane we had a fairly clear idea of the state of public opinion, of what it would accept and what it would reject. A carefully thought-out programme of speeches, press releases and broadcasts from the Government side seemed to be gradually edging things in the right way. To deduce from that that all was well would, however, have been to make the dangerous mistake of ignoring the submerged part of the iceberg. We had to be ready constantly to see our elaborate preparations stultified and defeated by popular outbursts due to trivial or irrelevant causes. Under the moderate, sensible political surface the violent passions of nationalistic and communal hatred were still all too strongly in being.

The longer our merger operation took, the greater would be the risk of these passions exploding. At the same time the searchlight of anti-Colonialist opinion in the world, then still focused on Algeria and the Congo, was bound to move over towards Arabia before long. When it did so, the merger operation, if not completed by then, would become infinitely more difficult than it was at the present moment.

CHAPTER 7

On tour again

Meanwhile, as opportunity allowed, I had been continuing my travels in the Protectorate, with visits to the Amirates of Beihan and Dhala, the Upper and Lower Aulaqi Sultanates, the Upper Aulaqi Sheikhdom, and the Wahidi Sultanate. Each of these places has a strong distinctive character of its own which I must try to bring out.

Beihan is the sharp end of the Western Protectorate. It sticks out in a salient between the Yemen, the Empty Quarter, and the Hadhramaut, and shows the influence of all these three different worlds. It is the remotest part of the Protectorate from Aden and was relatively late in concluding its protection Treaty with the British Government. In more recent years, however, its exposed position facing the Yemen had made it particularly conscious of the advantages of the British connection.

The ruling family of Beihan are a branch of the Hashemites, very proud of their descent from the Prophet and also of their relationship with the Jordanian Royal Family. The Amir Saleh is not much older than King Hussein, and there is a definite physical resemblance between the two. The Amir rules in harmonious co-operation with his father, Sherif Hussein bin Ahmed, who is Federal Minister of the Interior and one of the outstanding characters of the Federation. Bearded, hawk-faced, flashing-eyed, Sherif Hussein bears a marked physical resemblance to a pirate chief. In the days of the Imamate he had been the arch-advocate of a forward policy towards the Yemen. Although one of the main supporters of the Federal concept, with his striking and dominating personality Sherif Hussein lives in an atmosphere of storm and drama which sometimes has divisive and disruptive effects on the

Federal scene. He is a picturesque figure, and inspires his friends with warm affection.

For me the visit to Beihan was like Old Home Week. I felt I was back in the Royal Palace at Amman, and practically expected to see a fur-hatted Circassian guard pacing the passage outside the door. Although wilder and woollier than their Jordanian cousins, the Beihan family have the same Hashemite characteristics: distinguished good manners, an acute social sense and a puckish, uncontrollable sense of humour. We were sitting on the ground under some fruit trees, eating oranges, and Trevaskis told a story about the eccentric Upper Aulaqi Sultan; how, when a senior British official to whom he had given lunch was taking leave and said, 'I hope to see you again soon,' the Sultan replied: 'I don't want to see *you* again ever.' This ridiculous social contretemps brought the house down. Bewhiskered, bedaggered and berevolvered, the shaggy Hashemites of the deep south squatting on the ground under the orange trees found it just as enjoyable as their more sophisticated relations would have done in the palaces of Amman.

The Wadi Beihan funnels out as it goes northward until it loses itself in the desert of the Empty Quarter. Beihan is quite different from the coastal plains with their sand dunes and occasional fields of cotton; quite different also from the barren mountains of the interior. It is more like one of the classic Middle Eastern oases – Azraq, or perhaps the Fayoum. The vivid green of young wheat and barley; mud-walled houses; occasional palm trees; long strings of camels padding off in all directions. Beihan was on the ancient trade route from India and the South Arabian coast to the Mediterranean and, like Petra, seems to have made a good thing out of it. There are ruins of cities – temples, market-places, and walls with massive blocks of imported stone and long administrative inscriptions which suggest that, for sheer official verbosity, pre-Islamic South Arabia could have given points even to the Government of British India.

Despite the admonitions of the Aden authorities, chunks of these ancient cities have been known to reappear, Himyaritic characters and all, in the modern buildings of Beihan – to combine

with struts of crashed R.A.F. aircraft and old .303 ammunition boxes in a curious squirrel-like amalgam which gives the place an architectural character all its own.

Although the farthest inland of all the States and the remotest from Aden, Beihan has an international quality which the others lack. The Arabic spoken there is less affected by regional deviations, and more classical and akin to that which I had heard spoken by the Bedouin of Transjordan. In Beihan one sees the traditional desert-dwellers in their black tents, and feels in touch with the Arab world as a whole. It is as it were the Protectorate's port on the great central sand ocean of Arabia, and open to all the external influences which blow in from it.

Dhala, by contrast, although far nearer to Aden, is very much the end of the world. It is on the Yemeni frontier, at the western end of the sector in which most of the trouble has occurred. Overrun by the Turks in the First World War, and by the Yemen in the nineteen-twenties, Dhala like the Audhali State was delivered by the growth of British air power round about 1930. Traditionally the control of the Amirs has been weak outside the immediate area of their capital. Between 1928 and 1947 the Regent Haidara, a man of authoritarian temper, tried to rectify this situation, but the methods which he used to extend his control brought him into conflict with the British Government and finally to self-imposed exile in the Yemen. The present Amir, Sha'aful bin Ali, is Haidara's cousin.

Dhala was the most recent scene of major Anglo-Yemeni conflict. In 1956 and 1957 the Imam of the Yemen and the ex-Regent Haidara synchronized an overt attack on the frontier and a campaign of internal subversion with the object of seizing the massif of Jebel Jihaf which dominates Dhala town from the west. It was during this campaign that the Assistant Adviser, Somerset, was besieged with a small group of Government Guards at the fort of Sarir, and relieved by British infantry in a dramatic operation which hit the London headlines. Since then, with British help, the Amir Sha'aful had been gradually regaining control of his Amirate.

Dhala is the only part of the Protectorate in which *qat* is grown in any quantity. Some of it is exported to Aden and the rest consumed by the inhabitants, giving them a cadaverous appearance which sets them apart from the robust and alert mountaineers of the neighbouring States.

There is a special magic about the early morning mists smoking up the perpendicular face of the Jebel Jihaf. I have never seen the North West Frontier of India, but imagine that it must have given very much the same impression: castled hill-tops, towering peaks with tented camps at their foot, strategic tracks through narrow gorges along which we would proceed, in military pomp, led by a troop of the Eleventh Hussars with coloured pennants flying from the antennae of their armoured cars, immediately escorted by jeeploads of Federal Guards, and watched by Marine Commandos operating walkie-talkies from salient points beside the track. The Yemeni frontier had been quiet in this area for some time, and the presence of British troops was less by way of military precaution than in order to give them a welcome change from the routine of service life in Aden.

We had the full official treatment, except that the ceremonial cannon which nearly blew up Sir Tom Hickinbotham made no appearance in our programme. It must have exploded for the last time. After the usual tribal fusillade at the bottom of the hill, we drove in slow procession up the steep slope to the Amir's castle, protected by files of Federal Guardsmen against a jostling crowd which was waving banners with long inscriptions. After my experience of Jordanian demonstrations, I expected these to be in a tone of militant Pan-Arabism, calling for the departure of the British forthwith if not sooner. It was therefore something of an anticlimax to find that all they said was: 'Oppressed by Lahej' – the reference being to a current quarrel with Dhala's large neighbour over customs dues on supplies from Aden which had to pass through Lahej in order to reach Dhala. The episode brought home to me the strength of parochialism and local loyalties in South Arabia, and the difficulty of turning even the existing Federation into a reality.

After lunch we drove with the Amir to the frontier fort at

Sana and from its roof looked through field-glasses across a flat valley towards the Yemeni fort at Qataba. Our political officer in Dhala seemed to have quite a cosy relationship with his Yemeni opposite number in Qataba, and there was a conscious atmosphere of 'live and let live' on this bit of the frontier, completely unlike the tension then maintained on the Audhali sector by Ruweishan, the dynamic Yemeni Naib of Beidha.

On the way back we stopped the convoy to look at a field which had recently turned over from wheat to *qat*. The little green bushes in their tidy rows were wilting in the current drought, but other fields near by had been irrigated, and the Amir was able to present me with a handful of leaves from a consignment ready packed in its neat wicker cylinder for dispatch to the Aden market. I found the taste acrid but not disagreeable. One can imagine how welcome something fresh and green like this must be among the grey-black mountains of the Protectorate and the almost equally granitic warehouses of Aden itself. I stopped chewing before habit-formation had time to set in, but I felt that I was no longer entirely without sympathy for the standpoint of the addict.

The people of Dhala have in the past had a reputation for violence. For the British visitor the place has acquired a sinister mythology of its own. In one valley Mr. Davie, the Assistant Adviser, was assassinated. In another Major Seager, the British Agent, very nearly met the same fate. In a downstairs room of the political officer's house where we stayed, Mr. Mound was murdered by one of the guards. There was no electricity yet in Dhala and at night, with hissing pressure lamps, the atmosphere was a bit creepy.

These murders, and attempted murders, sound as if they had happened a long time ago, but in fact date from about fifteen years back – so recent was the pioneering phase of effective British penetration into the interior.

A tour which my wife and I made soon afterwards in the Aulaqi Wahidi country in the centre of the Protectorate took us into other territory which had only recently been opened up.

A picturesque member of our party was Qaid Mubarak, a bearded old warrior who was acting as Bedouin liaison officer in the Western Aden Protectorate Office. Mubarak is an Aulaqi, and visits to his home country are rare treats for him. As a young man, he killed an uncle or two in a blood feud connected with the family honour, and he therefore does not normally care to return home except under the auspices of suitably senior British officers.

The flight from Aden to Nisab, the capital of the Upper Aulaqi Sultanate, takes an hour and a quarter. Already before take-off a slight *frisson* had gone through our party. Sultan Awadh, so it was reported, would be at the airstrip to meet us. This, if true, would be a minor sensation. The Sultan had spent nearly all of the last four years shut up in his house in Nisab, brooding on grievances which he believed he had against the Aden Government. I had long wanted to meet this unconventional potentate, ruler of a State with which we had a protection Treaty but no advisory Treaty on the modern pattern. In fact, apart from the turbulent Yafai Highlands, the Upper Aulaqi Sultanate was about the only remaining area of importance in the Western Protectorate into which British influence had not infiltrated. The main north and south communications of the central part of the Protectorate run through the State, and certain forts protecting them had been built in the early nineteen-fifties but later abandoned. The Sultanate, unlike all its neighbours, had not joined the Federation.

Sure enough, the Sultan was waiting to meet us at the airstrip – a burly, portly man, with a rifle held horizontally across his shoulders. Among the turbaned or headclothed tribesmen he was eccentrically bareheaded, with thick grey hair and a Henry VIII beard dyed orange some time ago and now showing a deep aureole of natural grey round the edge of the chin. There was nothing abnormal in his greeting or in the processional fusillade by local tribesmen which followed. Afterwards however, during a salute in my honour by firecrackers pooped off from the mouth of an 1870-vintage cannon, the Sultan slipped away as the rest of us walked towards the mud tower which housed him and where he was going to give us lunch. It was explained to us that he

wanted to stay and talk to the tribal chiefs on the airfield – many of whom had never seen him in their lives.

On the way we inspected the State Secretariat which had just been established in another mud-brick château nearby, with everything brand-new – new Naib, new accountant, new steel cabinets, new files. It turned out that the highly traditional-looking turbans and uniforms of the Sultan's guard were equally new and had just been run up by a tailor in Crater. Sultan Awadh had suddenly decided to emerge from his palace and start running the country in something more approaching the conventional manner. I should like to be able to claim that it was our visit, and the prestige of the Governor's office, which had jerked him out of his long hibernation. The real explanation however is, I believe, a more complex and more interesting one. Sultan Awadh it seems had begun to worry about British intentions: were we perhaps tired of his lethargy and thinking of replacing him by a more active member of his family? He had therefore decided to come out of his shell, and had found in my arrival a convenient and decorous pretext for doing so.

We had a goodish Arab lunch, sitting on the floor of a small square upstairs room in the palace, the Sultan himself leaning against the central pillar and combining hospitable smiles with an occasional glance of psychopathic shrewdness. In conversation he emphasized the confidential character of his remarks by a sort of digging gesture of extreme mysteriousness.

'Which do you prefer,' he asked Mubarak, 'the Governor or the Agent?'

'I work for the British Government and not for individuals,' replied Mubarak with soldierly correctness.

The Arabs never hold oddness against anyone. In a curious way Sultan Awadh was respected by his people. As an individual I found him disarmingly likeable. His peculiarity was I think to be ascribed to a number of characteristics: poverty, suspicion, and a dash of half-crazy pride in his lineage.

In contrast to Sultan Awadh, who has a locally accepted claim to descent from the pre-Islamic kings of Ma'an, his neighbour, the

Upper Aulaqi Sheikh, while coming from the same general stock, is of a family which has emerged more lately at the top of the tribal tree. (There is no logical distinction between the titles Amir, Sultan and Sheikh. Just to make the Aulaqi picture even more confusing, the Upper Aulaqi Sheikh is always addressed as 'Amir'.) His family, the Ahl Farid, in the older generation still have a certain loudness and roughness. They are a vigorous gang, and have produced two of the dominating personalities in the Western Protectorate. One is Sheikh Farid, who helps his brother, the Amir Abdulla, to rule the State, and also has a close relationship with his son, Sheikh Mohammed Farid, at that time the Federation's Minister of Finance, and later to become its first Minister for External Affairs. There is a sharp contrast between Sheikh Farid, the strong man of the Aulaqi country, a self-taught, hard-faced, rifle-on-shoulder traditionalist, and the sophisticated Mohammed, who has developed, through Oxford and extreme Arab nationalism, into an efficient young Minister, well able to find his way around Whitehall – yet still keeping his roots in patriarchal Aulaqi soil. The other strong man of the Ahl Farid is Fadhl Abdulla, who, like Mohammed, has left home to make his career on the wider stage of the Federation. As senior Arab officer in the Federal Guard, Fadhl Abdulla occupies a position of importance and responsibility.

Unlike the Upper Aulaqi Sultanate, the Sheikhdom is fully under the ruler's administrative control. It is a founder member of the Federation and the régime is backed by a battalion of the Federal Army, (formerly the Aden Protectorate Levies), stationed as a kind of general reserve at Ataq, in the great wadi that divides the Western Protectorate with its volcanic funnels and steeples from the Eastern Protectorate with its billiard-table plateau of limestone *jōl*.

As we drove into Said, the capital of the Sheikhdom, the houses of Sheikh Farid and Fadhl Abdulla dominated the scene from their hill-tops, the afternoon sun flashing from square looking-glasses set Aulaqi-fashion, one above each window, in the wall.

Both Nisab and Said are handsome, close-packed mud-brick settlements, housing three to five thousand people each. Their

concentrated batteries of long-drop sanitation produce a piercing and unforgettable stench. Indeed by the end of a tour in the Protectorate one begins to find something cosy and reassuring about the aura of really ancient, caked human excrement. It is what all our forebears have lived with, right up to the last three or four generations, so that if atavism has any meaning at all it is natural that such a whiff should strike a responsive chord in us. 'Ah, monsieur,' said the aged *marquise* some time in the mid-nineteenth century, voluptuously savouring the fumes of a dung-hill, 'comme cela me rappelle les beaux jours d'autrefois!'

Next day we wound our way eastwards between the towering S-bend walls of the Wadi Yeshbum. At one point near the entrance to the gorge, our convoy, led by armoured cars of the Federal Army and landrovers of the Federal Guard, passed another one, stationary and headed in the opposite direction – armoured cars of a British regiment, then Colonel White, commanding the Federal battalion from Ataq, with his adjutant and a Sapper officer from Aden and a long column of troops.

They had been reconnoitring a new route which the Royal Engineers and the Federal Army together were going to pierce through this inhospitable country. It was an enjoyably romantic encounter. The British officers in their headcloths and goggles, the jeeploads of cheerful Arab soldiery, the solemn young subaltern of the Royal Irish Hussars looking out of the top of his ferret car – the whole thing could have been a recruiting poster in the 'After Sandhurst' series.

At other times tribesmen waited for us by the road and let off their rifles in salute over our heads. The Aulaqi tradition is that, the nearer the bullet goes to the visitor's skull, the greater the respect shown. If I ever have to face a firing squad, it will have no terrors for me after the Wadi Yeshbum.

Finding ourselves ahead of time, we made an unexpected excursion up one of the side wadis to a mountain village. There was a great deal of hand-kissing and friendly reproaching and passing round of drinking water in a rather grubby bowl. Then the local headman was caught levelling his rifle point-blank at one of the village oxen, and restrained, literally with his finger on the trigger,

by the violent intervention of the Amir and Sheikh Farid. This was a narrow escape. Once he had killed the ox, we should have had no choice but to stay until it was cooked and eaten, which in a packed programme would have involved us in about nine hours' delay.

Having survived this hazard, we entered the Wahidi State on time. At the border between the Eastern and Western Protectorates there was a brief meeting between our escorts past and present; the khaki berets of the Federal Guard giving place to the more picturesque pink headcloths of the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion, reminiscent of those worn by the Arab Legion in Jordan and introduced into the Eastern Protectorate by Ingrams after a visit to Glubb Pasha in Amman. (At the same time Ingrams christened the headquarters of the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion 'Lejjūn', after an Arab Legion post in the Transjordanian desert which is believed to have been originally so-called because it was a Roman legionary camp. One can imagine the archaeologist of the future being completely foxed by such evidence for a Roman presence in Qa'iti territory. Could Aelius Gallus really have got so far?)

Just over the border, at Habban, we were received by the Wahidi Sultan, a dashing, excitable and impetuous young ruler. His State, which is larger than most and under full administrative control, lies in the middle of the Protectorate. For the traveller the Wahidi country is exhilarating to approach from either direction. Coming from the east, from the merchant-and-peasant-and-holy-sayyid world of the Hadhramaut, one feels one is nearing the invigorating tribal uplands of the Western Protectorate. Coming from the west, as we did this time, one is struck by a feeling of freedom and space – broad wadis, distant mountains, cloud shadows moving over cliffs capped by Himyaritic ruins.

We camped that night outside Habban. Behind the walls and closely packed towers of the mud-brick city rose an outline of mountains which echoed it in clumsier and more ponderous form – up-ended slabs, irregular sawn-off cones, curtains and shoulders and descending staircases, all thrown up blackly against the red afterglow. It was a heavy piece of scene-painting – expressionism *en plein*. Just after sunrise next morning, the effect was

different, with the city still in shadow, and the sun playing on a thick wad of mist behind it and on the mountainous replica beyond.

At Azzan, the Sultan's home town, our reception was boisterous. Sultan Nasser can always be relied upon to produce the cannon with the loudest bang, the longest honorific bursts of machine-gun fire.

At lunch in the palace I had a talk with the Sultan's Secretary and head of the State administration, the Amir Mohammed bin Said, another of those picturesque elderly characters who play such a large part in the interior of Arabia. Bin Said, a cousin of the Sultan, has one eye, a great deal of shrewdness, and an even greater measure of determination. He sat puffing sociably at his hubble-bubble and passing philosophic judgements on his fellow-countrymen. 'We are like birds,' he said, referring to the difficulties of extending the Federation; 'you have got to catch each of us from a different tree,' and with his free hand he made graphic snatching gestures in different parts of the air around him. 'Birds,' he kept repeating; '*tūyūr*, *tūyūr*, *tūyūr*', and he roared with laughter. This capacity for detached self-criticism is one of the most engaging Arab traits. With it all however Bin Said was also a masterful and passionate man of action. The Wahidi's relations with the Upper Aulaqi Sheikhdom next door had traditionally been bad, and had gone to worse as the result of a prolonged frontier dispute which was not yet settled. The situation had been aggravated still further by Bin Said's personal differences with his Aulaqi counterpart and rival strong man, Sheikh Farid. Both these gentlemen were completely self-taught, but both had arrived at a philosophy based on the hard realities of tribal diplomacy and administration: the South Arabian branch of the university of life – Mudbrick, so to say.

About Sultan Nasser himself there was an attractively straightforward quality – his likes and dislikes, his violent rages, his readiness to forget and forgive. His State was shortly going to enter the Federation – the first part of the Eastern Aden Protectorate to do so. This was right and proper, since the Wahidi's natural affinities are with the West and not with the East. Nevertheless, I could not help wondering what would be the effect on

Sultan Nasser personally and how his spontaneity would be affected by the jostling, competitive, highly political world of Al Ittihad.

On the way back to Aden by air we stopped at Ahwar to visit the Lower Aulaqi Sultanate. Unlike their brothers in the Sheikhdom, the Lower Aulaqis are on excellent terms with the Wahidis across their eastern border. Their young Sultan had been named Nasser in order to do honour to the Wahidi ruler who was about ten years his senior. Sultan Nasser bin Aidrus had only just come of age and taken over the administration of his State. It was one with a tradition of tribal animosities and of violent rivalries within the ruling family. Ahwar itself is in the coastal plain, on the edge of a delta where increasing quantities of cotton are being grown. I sensed that the young Sultan had hidden springs of energy behind his placid appearance and sweet-natured demeanour. Besides running his State he would soon achieve Federal office. In the new and difficult post of Minister for Supreme Council Affairs, he would be taking the Speaker's chair at sessions of the Federal Council, and would also be responsible for bringing into the conduct of Federal Government business an element of continuity and cohesion which would otherwise be greatly lacking under the prevalent system of a monthly chairmanship rotating among the Ministers. Such continuity would be even more badly needed if and when Aden came into the Federation.

CHAPTER 8

Aden and South Arabia

Outside the circle of the conference table and the camp, wider events were moving.

Throughout 1961 Britain's credit in the Middle East, which had been reduced to such a low level five years before, continued its steady reascent. The dispatch of British forces to Kuwait in July proved our determination and ability to defend that State and its oilfield if required. It also underlined the critical importance of the Aden base, without which the Kuwait operation could never have been mounted with anything like the same speed.

Meanwhile, a sharp improvement had taken place in Aden's relations with the Yemen. Whatever we might think of the Imam's internal policies and methods, it was strongly to the interest of Aden and of the Federation to have peaceful relations with such a close neighbour. This advantage was not only political but economic; the Yemen represented an important market for various types of goods imported through Aden.

Shortly after my arrival we decided to take firm measures to prevent Yemeni émigrés in Aden from intriguing against the Imam's régime. A strong warning was issued, and some of the leading trouble-makers were expelled. This action, which was in fact no more than our duty under our existing agreements with the Yemen, seemed to convince the Imam that we were genuinely concerned to get on better terms with him. Simultaneously his own relations with the United Arab Republic were going from bad to worse, and in December 1961 the link which bound the two countries together in the 'United Arab State' was broken off by President Nasser.

This new shake of the Middle Eastern kaleidoscope provided

us with an admirable political opportunity for transforming the whole tone of our dealings with our northern neighbour. Opportunity in itself however is never enough in such matters. We were fortunate to have, in Ronald Bailey, a British representative at Taiz of the personal calibre required to turn the opportunity to full advantage.

We in Aden did what we could to second Bailey's efforts. We encouraged the purchase of Yemeni *qat* instead of Ethiopian. We took action to improve the road between Aden and the Yemeni frontier, the first step being to extend the tarmac stretch from Aden as far as Lahej. A daily air service between Aden and Taiz was established at the beginning of 1962. Aden had traditionally been known as the 'eye of the Yemen'. It seemed by degrees to be resuming this function.

Our improved relationship with the Yemen produced a corresponding decline in the fortunes of the dissident leaders in the Western Protectorate. In the mountains of Lower Yafa, Mohammed Aidrus, the only one of them with serious nationalistic and anti-imperialist pretensions, was driven out of his stronghold at El Qara and forced to take refuge in the Yemen; the authorities there received him with fine words but the minimum of concrete help. This development represented a success for the Federal Government, but it unfortunately resulted in no progress towards the assertion of Federal and State authority over the dissident Lower Yafa area. In Upper Yafa the situation was more confused, but one of the most important dissident leaders, the picturesquely named First Naqib of Mausata, decided to give up the struggle and make his peace with the Government. In Dhala, the important Azraqi tribe, dissident since 1956, composed their differences with the Amir and submitted their territory to his control.

Promoted by these successes, the cohesion and authority of the Federation continued to make good progress. The Federal Council held their first meeting in the new capital of Al Ittihad in June. In November the Aden Protectorate Levies were ceremonially handed over to the Federation at a grand parade in Al Ittihad, and thenceforward were rechristened the Federal Regular Army. The expected accession of the Wahidi State before the end

of the year gave a further turn of speed to the Federal bandwagon.

Meanwhile, in the Eastern Protectorate, there were developments of great importance for the future. In November an agreement was signed between the Qa'iti and Kathiri States and the Pan-American International Oil Corporation, a subsidiary of Standard Oil of Indiana, for a large concession area in the Northern Desert. The prospect of oil wealth produced all the effects which could have been expected. On the Island of Socotra the Mahra Sultan suddenly came to life and began to press us for help in establishing his authority over his mainland territories. Rival frontier claims between the Qa'iti, Kathiri and Mahra States in the Northern Desert suddenly revived or came into being for the first time. In Mukalla, capital of the Qa'iti State, there was a new note of nationalistic fervour in the State Government's dealings with the British authorities.

In Aden, all remained calm, but there were plenty of currents running below the surface. The Aden T.U.C. had been considering how best to combat the Industrial Relations Ordinance of 1960. Towards the end of 1961 it became clear that militant counteraction was intended. This took the form of strikes by the Transport and General Workers' Union in October, and the B.P. (Refinery) Union in December. Both strikes lacked any satisfying explanation in industrial terms and seemed mainly designed to probe the attitude of the Government; if so, the prosecutions under the Ordinance, leading to sharp sentences in both cases, can have left the Unions in no doubt that the law would be upheld.

The Ordinance in fact put the Aden T.U.C. in an awkward situation. The only legal way in which individual unions could gain exemption from it, and consequently recover their normal right to strike, was by accepting the Ordinance's validity and complying with its requirements. The A.T.U.C., however, did not recognize the Ordinance and was thus bound to prohibit its component unions from registering, under the terms of the Ordinance, any agreements which they might negotiate. From the

purely industrial point of view, we in the Government would have been glad to see the Ordinance replaced by negotiated agreements between Unions and employers' organizations. Unfortunately, however, the leaders of the A.T.U.C. had made it more than plain that their object in seeking to regain use of the strike weapon was political and not industrial. It was evident that we must be prepared for more serious trouble to come. This would have the specific political purpose of preventing the Colony's merger with the Federation, to which the A.T.U.C., with the backing of the Cairo propaganda machine, were resolutely opposed. At the same time, the A.T.U.C. maintained their special hostility towards Bayoomi, the Minister for Labour. In these circumstances it was more necessary than ever for the Government to continue ensuring that the provisions of the 1960 Ordinance were strictly and resolutely upheld.

Meanwhile, as part of the development of representative institutions in Aden, local elections in the Sheikh Othman quarter were held for the first time in November. Extreme nationalist elements tried to persuade the voters to boycott the elections, but their attempt failed completely and a number of moderate candidates were returned. To be offset against this encouraging development was the suspected existence of corrupt practices in the Aden Municipal Council, which impelled the Government to institute a commission of inquiry under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Blandford.

By the end of my first year in Aden it was abundantly plain to me that, whatever the administrative distinctions inside South Arabia – Colony, Federation, Protectorate, Islands – it was quite essential for us to have a single, synoptic view of the problems of the whole area both in the political and economic fields. Politically a unifying thread was provided by the theme of Federation, which might not be immediately applicable to the whole of the area, but nevertheless was useful as a concept reducing the problem to some kind of sense. Economically a region-wide view seemed to me to be required with particular urgency. It was self-evident that the present boom conditions in the Colony must be ephemeral. British forces would be there for years to come but

they would obviously not be there for ever, still less would they maintain their spending in Aden at its then existing rate of £11,000,000 per year. Having in mind the dangers inherent in the economic situation, we asked the Commonwealth Development Finance Corporation in London to set on foot an investigation into the possibilities of diversifying Aden's economy. We hoped, with justification, that their inquiry would show us the best way forward for the whole South Arabian area.

The visit of Princess Alexandra of Kent to Aden in December 1961 brought the year to a climax of gaiety and enjoyment. The Princess was on the way home from a long and exhausting Far Eastern tour, but in spite of this undertook a forbidding programme of official engagements in Aden. My wife and I gave a ball in her honour at Government House, which, thanks to the Princess' personality, turned into a riot of fun. By way of preparation for the party we had converted a patch of waste ground on the point below the main terrace into an open-air dance-floor. The terrace itself was covered with small tables at which our Arab friends, in the main still shy about taking the floor on such an occasion, sat and watched the proceedings. The dance-floor was packed with European guests, including young officers from all the British units in Aden. We had a good band, the women were dressed with elegance, and it was a brilliant sight to see the crowded floor hung with lanterns, surrounded by cannons and mortars, and water lapping all round the point below.

The local representative of the Imam of the Yemen, Sheikh Ali Jabali, an imposing and quick-witted merchant in flowing robes, was presented to the Princess, who immediately said that she would like to visit the Yemen. 'When?' asked Sheikh Ali, 'tomorrow?' In practice it could not be arranged, but I felt sure that had the Princess been able to go, the Sheikh and his Royal employer would indeed have made all the arrangements for the following day.

My wife and I were sad indeed to see Princess Alexandra depart. She had given us the full benefit of her extraordinary capacity for changing official functions into sheer entertainment,

and had reminded the Arabs, in a singularly gracious way, of the majesty of the British Crown.

As my wife and I stood watching our guests on the evening of the dance, I had an uneasy feeling all of a sudden that for us personally this was too much happiness and too much good fortune.

CHAPTER 9

The Eastern Protectorate and the Islands

Sandwiched in between the Wahidi State, which had now joined the Federation, and the Mahra territories, which were administered neither by their legal Sultan on Socotra nor by anyone else, the Qa'iti and Kathiri States fell into a class of their own. Their population totalled about a quarter of a million, the Qa'iti outnumbering the Kathiri by something like four to one. While both States included large areas of desert, they also contained agricultural areas and fair-sized towns. Alone in South Arabia, the Qa'iti and Kathiri had something like the class structure traditional in other parts of the Arab world: the ruling families; the sayids, who exert a particular influence in these States; a substantial merchant class; peasantry; and nomadic bedouin.

In the four main towns – Mukalla, seaport-capital of the Qa'iti; and the three cities of the Wadi Hadhramaut: Seiyun, capital of the Kathiri; Tarim; and Shibam – the townspeople were more sophisticated than anywhere else in the area outside Aden. They listened to the radio and knew all the propaganda themes from the Voice of the Arabs by heart. They included a strong nationalist element.

Inhabitants of the Qa'iti and Kathiri States are known generically as Hadhramis. They have traditionally been among the most adventurous of the mercantile Arabs. Many of them followed their trading interests to South-East Asia and, early in this century, built up important businesses and properties in both Singapore and Indonesia. They never forgot the barren and poverty-stricken area from which they originated, and the Hadhrami

economy benefited greatly from their remittances. In old age they retired and came back to live in their South Arabian home.

War and nationalist revolution in South-East Asia changed all this. The Hadhrami interests in Indonesia were in effect written off completely. Those in Singapore still existed, but produced a greatly reduced return. As a result, many of the rich families of the area had fallen on sadly reduced days.

The opportunistic Hadhrami genius was, however, not to be so easily defeated. Diverted from South-East Asia, the national spirit of enterprise found other fields to conquer in the newly rich countries immediately to the north – Saudi Arabia, and the Oil States of the Persian Gulf. Remittances from these areas had not yet reached the level of those which came in before the war from South-East Asia; they had, however, gone a long way towards replacing them. In this respect the Hadhramis were quite different from the tribesmen of the Western Protectorate, who also emigrated in considerable numbers, but rarely for purposes of trade. On the contrary, with their mountaineering physique and South Arabian tolerance of heat, they produced ideal steel-workers, and the result was that Birmingham, Sheffield and Middlesbrough were full of Yafais, and Dhalais, and Aulaqis, and Audhalis – an unexpected far-flung fragment of the Arab diaspora.

Another major difference between the two Protectorates lay in the relative situations on their northern frontier. In the west the border with the Yemen was normally in a state of tension. Tribesmen were crossing it in both directions; Protectorate dissidents were often operating from the Imam's territory. There was a chronic source of disturbance, but the mere existence of the Yemeni threat was also a unifying factor; it brought most of the tribes and States of the Western Protectorate together in face of the common danger, and made them realize the steady value of the British connection. In the Eastern Protectorate the frontier was with Saudi Arabia, and ran through a completely desert area where all the wells lay on the Protectorate side. The nearest Saudis were therefore often a hundred miles away beyond the border, and presented no military threat. Such traffic as existed

across the frontier was confined to one or two well-marked routes, which were heavily used in the season of the pilgrimage to Mecca. Apart from that there was a coming and going of Bedouin tribes in accordance with seasonal grazing conditions, and there were occasional tribal raids. There was, however, no sense whatever of a pressing threat, and thus no incentive to unity between the States and no pressing reminder of the practical advantages of British protection.

British relations with the States of the Eastern Protectorate were channelled, under the Governor, through a senior official called the Resident Adviser and British Agent, who lived in Mukalla. In my time this was Arthur Watts, the last in a tradition of able and individualistic administrators.

Situated two and a half hours away by air from the Governor in Aden, and normally not affected with international problems and other urgent political excitements, the Resident Adviser in Mukalla had traditionally been left to carry on with his job, maintaining contact with the Governor by a fairly frequent exchange of visits.

The most pressing problems of the area were economic rather than political. Whether or not the Pan-American Company might find oil in commercial quantities, it was quite essential for the Hadhrami States to develop the existing pillars of their economy in such a way as to reduce their dependence on British financial aid. The main resources were agriculture – cereals, tobacco, and dates, cultivated both in the coastal areas around Mukalla and in the Wadi Hadhramaut; fisheries, where there were great possibilities of expansion, in particular an apparently inexhaustible supply of crayfish, a delicacy whose international currency was rapidly rising, and in this case simply cried out for commercial exploitation; and tourism. Here in fact was an unknown area of sensational beauty and an admirable winter climate. The possibilities of developing the tourist trade were too good to miss. As in the Western Protectorate and indeed in Aden, there were British officials who took the line that this would be 'spoiling' the territories, and that it was far better to keep the beastly tourists out. I always felt that this was a good line of talk for

social occasions, but quite irresponsible as a serious policy for governments. Regrettable as it may be in many respects, we all live in one world, and as long as we British are responsible for any bits of it outside our own islands, it is our duty to prepare those bits to take their place in this one world and not to lock them up in a number of ivory towers with an outlook only towards a romantic past.

The Qa'iti was the most evolved of all the States in the Protectorate. It had its own army, of battalion strength, its own armed constabulary and civil police and a highly effective customs organization which brought in the main item of State revenue, namely more than half a million pounds a year. The State budget was balanced with the help of a yearly British subsidy of rather over £100,000. The Kathiri, being much smaller in area and population, had a smaller budget in proportion, with an annual British subsidy of between £20,000 and £30,000.

With my warm encouragement, Arthur Watts conceived his most pressing duties to lie in the economic field. Using the funds made available to the Eastern Protectorate under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts, and concerting closely with the State authorities, he called into being a wide variety of projects, from schools and hospitals to dams, roads and plants for fumigating dates, or freezing lobster tails.

This, however, was only half of the picture. There were strong nuclei of political consciousness in Mukalla and in the main provincial towns of the Eastern Protectorate. Watts devoted a great deal of effort to promoting the development of these cells. We could be gratified by the progress made in village and town councils – culminating some time later in a successful municipal election in Mukalla, carried out under the supervision of Sheikh Mohammed Ba Matraf, one of the ablest of the Qa'iti officials.

The Qa'iti ruler was the son of an outstanding father who had ruled the State for many years. Sultan Awadh was a man of about fifty and a semi-invalid. He was advised by a Sultan's Council, in which the dominant characters were the Minister, Jehan Khan, a Pakistani who came to Mukalla from the Somaliland Customs Department, and proved himself an able financial administrator,

and Sheikh Bubakr Barahim, a blind Mukalla merchant of considerable shrewdness and insight. The Sultan's eldest son, Ghalib, who was at school in the Sudan, had been officially recognized as his heir.

The main political problems of the Qa'iti State were a nationalistically-minded city mob in Mukalla itself, which required constant watching; and a number of turbulent tribes in the interior which knew nothing about Arab nationalism but felt that their interests were neglected by a predominantly mercantile ruling group in Mukalla. In July 1961 one of these tribes, the Khamai, cut one of the two roads from Mukalla to the Wadi Hadhramaut and inflicted heavy casualties on troops of the Mukalla Regular Army which had set out to punish them. Other tribes joined in with the Khamai, and combined operations by the Qa'iti State Forces, the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion, and the R.A.F. were required to bring the tribesmen to submission. There was no major political purpose behind this disturbance.

Crushed in between the sea and a steep wall of mountains, Mukalla had kept an unspoilt genuineness of character which must be unique in the Arab world, and which, judging by the number of ocean-going ships to be seen unloading off the port, seemed unlikely to be preserved for much longer. The town, with its narrow alleys and steep banks of houses along the waterfront, is a hundred per cent Arab. The Sultan's palace is Indian – an Indo-Victorian, Plain-Tales-from-the Hills Gothic of pointed arches and dark green shutters. Originally mercenary soldiers from the Yafai mountains of the Western Protectorate, the Sultanic family came to Mukalla via Hyderabad, where they commanded the Nizam's guard, and brought with them an atmosphere more reminiscent of India than of Arabia. The State administration was run by Jehan Khan with the parsimonious efficiency of the old Raj. The keynote at all the numerous military parades in the Qa'iti capital was struck by the Pakistani bandmaster of the Mukalla Regular Army, Lieutenant Deswendi Khan, an imposing military-intellectual figure in spectacles with a long starched cockscomb sticking out of his turban, who played 'Colonel Bogey' and 'The flowers that bloom in the spring' with an emotion

which brought tears to the eyes. Indeed, attending a review or a military concert in Mukalla, one had an extraordinarily powerful impression that all the clocks here had stopped seventy years ago; that the Raj was at its height, Victoria on the throne, Gilbert and Sullivan a fresh and revolutionary phenomenon, and Kipling a dangerous debunker. So strong was the link from Delhi via Hyderabad to the South Arabian shore, and so accurately and imaginatively did this Pakistani bandmaster understand and interpret the mentality of the late-Victorian British.

In the Kathiri State, although foreign influences were there, the atmosphere was more definitely Arabian. Sultan Hussein was the descendant of an ancient Sultanic line which once ruled the whole of the Qa'iti State and much of the Wahidi as well. In the Sultan's fairy-tale palace, sitting like a crisp, newly-iced cake under the steep walls of the Wadi, there was a Court poet and historian who held forth at length about the past glories of the Kathiri empire before the Yafai interlopers from the West encroached on it.

Sultan Hussein ran his State in traditional centralized manner with the help of a cousin who headed the Secretariat and of a brother who acted as private secretary. The Sultan was a shrewd man and had an instinctive touch in dealing with tribal and other leaders. He had for a long time seen the value of the Federation, and was one of the earliest champions of the idea that the Hadhrami States should join it.

In his personal life Sultan Hussein was a perfectionist. A man of small stature and elegant presence, he liked having everything around him beautifully organized and just so. His Arab food was the most delicious in South Arabia: rice, of which every grain seemed to have received personal attention; young mutton baked to a melting tenderness inside a sealed mud oven, the primitive equivalent of a pressure-cooker; and fruits of the Wadi temptingly prepared. His two palaces were spotless and his hospitality run with effortless efficiency.

Despite the Cairo radio and the link with Hadhramis abroad, life in the Wadi went on in peaceful isolation from the rest of the world. The whole tempo seemed slower and calmer than anywhere else in South Arabia.

One drives along the Wadi to Seiyun's two rival cities: Shibam, the astonishing agglomeration of mud-skyscrapers, so definitively described by Freya Stark in *The Southern Gates of Arabia*, and Tarim, where the holy sayids live in elegant and wealthy seclusion. (With that unfailing human fondness for inappropriate comparisons, Seiyun is known as the Paris of the Wadi, Shibam as its New York, and Tarim as its Rome.) Beside the roads are date-palms and streams and dusty fields under cultivation by plump, unveiled peasant girls in the pointed straw hat of a Welsh witch. There is the unmistakable sense of being in an oasis of greenery cut off from the rest of the world by desert expanses – a unique island of civilization in the middle of a vast sea of rock and sand. On each side of this smiling landscape are the perpendicular walls of the Wadi, the edges of the great limestone slab which stretches from the coast to the Northern Desert.

It is delicious to arrive home in the evening, plunge into the *jabia* or indoor swimming pool which is one of the civilized specialities of the Wadi, then, all dust and fatigue removed, sit on a flat roof among the palm branches and watch the moon rise above the limestone *jōl*. All is quiet except for the barking of dogs and the motoring of the electricity generator in its shed a quarter of a mile away.

It is a gentle, civilized world of its own, set somewhere between Arabia and South-East Asia, with its high-cheekboned, semi-Malay faces and its ginger coffee and its elaborate Indonesian-style mosques and its general atmosphere of tranquillity. Altogether I loved the Wadi and was always happy to return there. It had the charm of all transient things, for beyond a doubt politics and tourism would soon deprive it for ever of its blissful quietism.

The remaining mainland territory of the Eastern Protectorate, the Mahra country, I know only from the air. In my time it was not possible to visit it and no sort of administration existed there. Sultan Issa, on Socotra island, had however undertaken that the Pan-American Oil Company should be able to search for oil in his mainland territories, and it was clear that some sort of security would have to be established there in order to make this possible.

Flying over the mountainous interior and the coastline, broken by occasional green valley-mouths and fishing villages with spiky, outlandish Mahra names like Sayhūt and Damqūt, I felt the usual scruples about bringing a new area into contact with modern civilization. Were these people not better off with their rudimentary tribal society, their small-boat fishing, and their primitive, grubbing agriculture? Then I pushed these Arcadian theorizings aside and settled myself firmly in the conviction that, as long as we had responsibility in the Protectorate, we must do all we could to ensure the material advancement of its inhabitants, at whatever cost in terms of the romantic and the picturesque.

I only once visited Sultan Issa in his island capital, and the visit was regrettably a matter of hours only, so that I carried away no worthwhile impression of Socotra. Sam Elworthy and I went there from Aden in the Commando carrier *Bulwark*. We made a smooth thirty-six hour passage under the genial and hospitable command of Captain Fish Dalglish. Socotra, when we came up with it, was something quite out of our Arab world – a long green island with a mountainous crest to it, looking somehow schematic and over-simplified, like the drawing of an island on a map with crosses to mark buried treasure. We helicoptered ashore and had a rather gloomy interview with Sultan Issa, with whom Arthur Watts had to transact some business connected with the oil company agreement. The Sultan was not in a mood to agree on anything, so after about an hour we decided to beat a retreat. At my prompting, but without the slightest hope of success, Fish Dalglish asked the Sultan if he would like to visit *Bulwark*. Unexpectedly the Sultan agreed, and maintained his agreement even when he understood that this could only be done by helicopter, a form of conveyance he had never even seen before. So the rest of us flew back on board to prepare a suitable reception. Two helicopters were needed for the Sultanic party. One carried himself and his executioner, a charming, enormous African, who is believed to have cut off somebody's hand for theft some years ago but has, it seems, never done more than that to live up to his intimidating title; the other was crammed with rifle-bearing tribesmen of the Sultanic suite. As the Sultan's airborne convoy

approached the *Bulwark* a nine-gun salute was fired. He landed on the quarter-deck to be received by a Royal Marine guard of honour in full tropical rig. Afterwards senior officers of the ship were presented to him. The Sultan's morose concentration seemed to be wearing somewhat thin under the impact of so much ceremonial in his honour. Unfortunately, however, his suite were all barefoot and the flight deck of the *Bulwark* had been receiving the full force of the Indian Ocean sun for six hours or more. Soon the executioner and the rest of them were shifting nervously from one foot to another, then fairly dancing around like bears on hot bricks. Just in time Captain Dalglish adjourned the party to his cabin, where over soft drinks the Sultan was persuaded to agree to what was desired of him and what, incidentally, was very much to his own interest, within an hour – a record achievement in any negotiations with him. When he left with his party his face for the first time was seen to be covered in smiles. Altogether it was a marked success for Naval diplomacy.

During the war Socotra was a valuable base for aircraft engaged in anti-submarine patrols. Since then the airstrip had been deserted, but it was still in good enough condition for a Beverley aircraft from Aden to fly in and take off with us in the afternoon on our return journey. It was sad indeed to see no more of this inviting treasure island.

Perim and Kamaran are less romantic; in fact they are each, in different ways, down-at-heel and pathetic survivors of a former glory.

Lying right in the jaws of the Red Sea, Perim is crescent-shaped – the first in the chain of extinct volcanoes which runs along the South Arabian coast through Aden. After a short occupation by the Bombay Government in 1799, Perim was definitively annexed to Britain in 1856. The initiative was taken not, as the picturesque tradition has it, in order to forestall by a few hours a French occupation of the island, but on a cool assessment of its strategic value, and a clear perception of how this would be increased if current plans for a Suez canal were realized, as they would be some years later.[1]

[1] *Vide* T. E. Marston, *Britain's Imperial Rôle in the Red Sea Area, 1800–1878*, pp. 223–4.

The inside of the crescent, facing south, provides a deep and normally sheltered anchorage. During the great days of coal, from about the eighteen-eighties until the nineteen-thirties, Perim had its period of fame as a major bunkering station on the route to the East. The War Office map of 1930, based on originals dated 1917, contains all the features which one would expect to find in a strategic island of the period: Residency, cemetery (European), cemetery (native), Eastern Telegraph Company, Indian Infantry Lines – the full treatment. There is nothing left of all this today except two lighthouses operated by the Aden Port Trust, a water-condensing plant, and a depressed fishing village.

The island was run, under the Governor, by an Arab executive named Shubaili, who was born on Perim early in this century and has thus seen the glory come and go. He was the last in a historic line of administrators. One of them, Lieutenant Lawrence, was murdered in his bed at the Residency during the nineteen-twenties by soldiers of the Yemen Light Infantry who wanted to get at the cash in the safe under his bed. (This regiment had been formed by the Aden authorities during the First World War. There is often a touch of fantasy in the naming of locally raised British forces, but the 'Yemen Light Infantry' must surely be about the record.) As a result of this deed the regiment was very properly disbanded. Another of Shubaili's predecessors was the legendary British officer who happily governed Perim from London until he had the bad luck to run into his superior officer in the club. The island is garrisoned by a platoon of Aden Armed Police – tall strapping fellows from the Protectorate who enjoy their two months' tour of duty on Perim because the island allowance they draw enables them to save a bit of money.

In its great days, Perim had a population of about three thousand Arabs and three hundred Europeans. After the coaling company pulled out in the mid-thirties a contractor was called in, and given a free run among the derelict buildings. These are now reduced to roofless, windowless hulks. Shubaili knew exactly what they all were – shops, merchants' houses, and an imposing Indian-owned hotel. A large building on the point is still kept up as a Government resthouse. This, Shubaili explained, had been

the residence of the coaling company's agent, who lived there with his wife and family and his tennis-court and his fenced-off swimming-pool. Inside, the house is a comfortable Indian bungalow, full of heavy blackish furniture, like the smoking-room of a pre-war P. and O.

There is always something sinister about recent ruins, but the shell of this coal-age boom-town was particularly disquieting for a visitor arriving straight from the buoyant oil-age boom-town of Aden. The comparison had something ominous about it.

Kamaran, two hundred miles to the northward up the Red Sea, in the greatest possible contrast. Where Perim is steep and black and austere and volcanic, Kamaran is flat and made of greyish-pink coral, broken here and there into luscious-looking mangrove swamps. The south-west monsoon which had been strong enough at Perim was here blowing a gale and practically snatched a Certificate of Honour out of my hand as I presented it to an Island worthy at a little ceremony on our arrival at the airport.

Kamaran was conquered from the Turks in a bloodless landing by Indian troops in the First World War and has remained part of the British Empire ever since. It must be about all that is left of the Treaty of Sèvres. It was put under Aden, presumably because there was nowhere else to put it, but is remote geographically and in other ways from South Arabia and its problems. Kamaran's British administrators have a record of long reigns – in fact, the Commissioner at the time of my visit, Colonel Alban, was only the third in line since 1917. He was a patriarchal figure and seemed entirely happy to spend his life without English company.

While Perim is the ghost of the coal-age, Kamaran is the ghost of the pilgrimage-quarantine business, which in its time proved scarcely less profitable than coal. The Turks had occupied the island in 1882 and opened a quarantine station there which dealt with all pilgrims coming to Mecca from the south, including the large Far Eastern contingent. This continued to function under British rule and was not closed down until 1953, when the Saudis opened their own quarantine station in Jedda and put the large and profitable pilgrim camps of Kàmaran out of business. They too have been plundered by contractors and only their shells remain.

The Residency area of Kamaran breathes the last enchantments of the Ottoman Empire. In the workshops are expensive bits of Austrian-made machinery, clearly the latest thing of about 1900. The water-distilling plant, made at Glasgow in the eighteen-eighties and driven by a boilerful of mangrove logs, goes on slogging happily away as if Sultan Abdul Hamid II was still on the throne. Alban had a Skoda-type howitzer placed ornamentally outside his front door and a tiled veranda which would not have disgraced the palace of the Vali Pasha in Beirut. Nearby are various small houses, also from the Turkish period, with that solid, European, almost North German look worn by the architectural products of Ottoman expansion in Arabia – like the station buildings on the Hejaz railway.

A mile away, on the Yemeni mainland, we could clearly see the port of Salīf, with a line of waterfront buildings and a Japanese steamer lying off loading salt. In 1957, during the climax of direct Soviet intervention in Arab affairs, quantities of Russian arms for the Yemeni Government were unloaded there. Through his telescope Alban had been able to see the field-guns and the tanks as they came ashore.

Ever since the first British occupation, the Kamaranis had been terrified that we would one day abandon them and that the Imam and his régime would then move in. The result was a robustly pro-British sentiment which clearly came from the heart. Going round the local school I found it impossible to stop the children singing 'Rule, Britannia!' and 'God Save the Queen!' 'Long to reign over us,' they chanted, with the utmost conviction – as if they knew something that I didn't. Compared with the state of things prevailing in the Imamate across the water, the beneficent rule of Colonel Alban must certainly have had much to recommend it.

CHAPTER 10

Agreement in Aden

Meanwhile the merger talks were beset by difficulties both technical and political.

On the technical side, London had sent us two experts of high standing, Sir Richard Ramage and Mr Pearl, to advise us respectively about the Civil Service, and about finance, in the context of merger. To understand the settlement which finally emerged, it is going to be necessary to look at these highly complicated matters.

While everything possible was being done by education and training to speed up the 'Adenization' of the Colony's Public Service, the efficient operation of our base, and the welfare of Aden which depended on it, would continue for some time to require the presence of a substantial body of English Civil Servants. (I use the word 'English' advisedly, for reasons which I have explained in Chapter 2.) According to recognized Colonial Office practice, any change which meant that the Secretary of State ceased to have ultimate control over the Service was bound to require a scheme enabling the Civil Servants, if they so wished, to retire with compensation. Experience in other emergent territories, however, had shown that the existence of such a compensation scheme resulted in a mass exodus of Civil Servants. In our case this could not be risked in view of the effect on the Aden base.

Somehow means would have to be found of bringing Aden into the Federation in a manner which avoided removing the Secretary of State's ultimate control over the English Civil Servants in Aden, and which at the same time – an essential proviso – provided practical protection for the interests of all Civil Servants in the Colony, whether English or local.

To meet the difficulty, agreement was eventually reached on the lines of proposals made by Sir Richard Ramage. These were briefly as follows. First, all English officials serving either in Aden or in the Federation should be placed, by Order in Council, at the disposal of the Governor, who would make them available, as required, for service with the Federal or Aden Governments. In return for this additional liability in respect of their service, the officials would receive a special allowance over and above their existing emoluments. Secondly, the Public Service Commission in Aden, the detached and independent body which safeguarded the interests of Civil Servants and maintained the non-political integrity of the service, would remain, as it was, in an advisory relationship to the Governor. (One of the accepted signals for a general compensation scheme for English civil servants in a Colonial territory is when the Public Service Commission switches over from 'advisory' to 'executive'; it thereby becomes free to dispose of the careers of Civil Servants without reference to the Governor, who normally exercises the Secretary of State's protection in such matters. Once a Public Service Commission has become executive, there is in principle nothing to stop the local members of it from promoting their brothers, cousins and nephews to the top of the Civil Service.) Finally, Ramage recommended the setting up of a new body, a Federal Public Service Commission, which should be advisory to the Supreme Council, but with the proviso that, in the case of former Aden civil servants who had been made available to the Federation, the Supreme Council would refer to the Governor and act on his advice if it should not be willing to accept the recommendation of the Public Service Commission in any particular case.

Both technically and from the human point of view I found staff questions the most difficult of all the ones which faced me in Aden. The foregoing short non-technical summary does no justice to the intimidating complexity of the problem or to the ingenuity and fairness of Sir Richard's solution. In essence his proposals were approved both by the Ministers in Aden and by the British Government, and were eventually incorporated into the London Agreement.

On the financial side the two main problems confronting us were these.

First, how could we devise arrangements whereby, after merger, revenue derived from Aden should continue to be spent on Government services (Health, Education, etc.) in Aden and not in other parts of the Federation? An answer to this question was essential, since no proposal for merger could be expected to pass the Aden Legislative Council if the opposition could maintain that Aden was being made to subsidize the rest of the Federation.

Secondly, there was the problem of the Customs. At present not only Aden but each State in the existing Federation had its own separate Customs organization. Indeed Customs receipts represented the main financial resource of the Federal States, the economy of which was not yet developed enough to stand any more sophisticated form of revenue-raising. The result was that goods in transit from Aden, say, to Beihan had to pass more than half a dozen State Customs barriers on the way; at each of these the lorry would have to be unloaded, and a sum paid to the State Customs Authorities. The crippling effect on internal trade inside the Federation can well be imagined. Plainly this was a serious defect in the existing Federal structure. But to bring Aden into the Federation, and to let Aden too, nevertheless, maintain its own separate Customs, would be to make a mockery of the whole merger. It therefore seemed essential to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the proposed accession of Aden in order to federalize this all-important subject, thereby freeing trade inside the whole Federal area, and also incidentally giving a very necessary reinforcement to the authority of the Federation at the centre. The difficulty was, if we did so, how to find another source of revenue to replace the Customs receipts received by the States. The obvious alternative method of raising revenue, namely the imposition of a Federal tariff corresponding to the present comprehensive tariff system of the States, would unfortunately not work in our case, since after merger this would have meant the erection of a tariff-wall around Aden, with the result that the people of Aden, who at present paid duty only on alcohol,

tobacco, motor spirits and *qat* – and light duties at that – would then have to pay duties on a much wider range of goods. The 'free port' status of Aden had always had something mystical about it, and there was a widespread fear among the shopkeeping class in the Colony that, if that status was interfered with, the extremely valuable shopping trade from ships' passengers would be lost. Yet it would also have been quite inappropriate, after merger, to allow a Customs barrier to remain between Aden and the rest of the Federation. The question thus looked pretty bleak and intractable.

In time, and with assistance from our own financial experts, Pearl found good solutions for both these problems. On the first point, it was agreed that the cost of the Aden departments which would be transferred to the Federation should be offset against the total of the Aden revenues, including Customs, which would be similarly transferred. If the balance, as fixed on the date of Aden's accession to the Federation, proved favourable to Aden, the Federal Government would pay Aden an annual sum representing the difference. There could thus be no question of Aden's being obliged to pay for the Federation. On the second point, Pearl proposed that Customs should become a Federal subject; and that the Federation should compensate the member States, other than Aden, for the loss of revenue involved by paying them annual sums based on the revenue which they derived from these sources during the financial year 1961–62. Both proposals were accepted by the Federal and Aden Ministers. In respect of Customs compensation I recommended separately that the British Government should make good to the Federation the sum which, under Pearl's proposal, it would have to pay the States.

On the difficult technical problems we now at last had reached workable solutions which could be put to London. It was clearly understood by all of us in Aden that the whole range of our agreement was subject to confirmation by the British Government.

On the political side, however, it still looked as if we would not even be able to get over the first hurdle, that of preliminary agreement among ourselves in Aden. We were still as far as ever from solving the red-hot question of the strength of Aden's

participation at Federal level, that is to say, in effect, the basis on which Aden should be admitted to the Federation relatively to the States already in it.

Now, however, a new difficulty arose on the Colony side. Saidi informed me that he could not agree to any constitutional advance in Aden, still less to Aden's entry into the Federation, unless new elections in the Colony were held first. Bayoomi and the Aden Ministers who favoured merger pointed out to Saidi that, as the existing franchise in Aden was agreed by all parties to be unsuitable, a new franchise would be required before elections could be held; but that, as this would need a year or more likely eighteen months to put into effect, his proposal would mean postponing all constitutional advance for that period of time. Saidi's attitude remained inflexible. He continued to attend the talks, but he was evidently doing so on the assumption that his eventual resignation, on the issue of elections before constitutional advance, would render any agreement so far reached null and void.

After the original deadline of October 1961 had proved impossible to conform with, we had promised the Secretary of State for the Colonies to let him have our agreed recommendations in the course of May 1962. By the middle of that month an agreement was in fact taking shape. Education, Health, Customs, Public Works, Communications and a number of lesser subjects were to be put under the exclusive authority of the Federation. The complex problem of responsibility for internal security in Aden looked like being solved in a manner which would recognize the need for the Governor's overriding powers to continue, the fact that internal security was and must remain a Federal and not a State subject, and the practical requirement for Aden to retain responsibility for its own Civil Police for an initial period after the merger.

Then, quite unexpectedly, the delicate question of Aden's participation in the Federal Cabinet and the Federal Assembly was settled by the Ministers at an informal meeting among themselves (Saidi alone being absent) on the basis of a compromise which did justice to Aden's position as a very special member State: four

Adeni Ministers in the Supreme Council out of fourteen; twenty-four Adeni representatives in the Federal Council out of eighty-five. At the same time amendments providing new safeguards for the position of individual States, including Aden, were proposed for inclusion in the Federal constitution.

This was a fair settlement, midway between the extreme positions which had been adopted on both sides when our discussions started the previous summer. On the original Adeni thesis that the Colony equalled the Federation, Aden would have had ten Ministers and sixty-one legislators – an obvious absurdity, since, apart from the unwieldy Federal Cabinet of twenty which would have resulted, Aden had not nearly enough potential legislators of the necessary calibre to fill the bill. On the extreme Federal thesis that Aden was simply another State, the Colony would have received no more than one Minister and six legislators – an equally absurd solution which would have taken no account of Aden's special geographical and economic situation.

It was regrettable to my mind that the solution reached about the Ministers should result as it did in a Supreme Council of fourteen members. This was both too many for practical convenience, and also an undesirable burden on the hard-pressed Federal budget. Unfortunately the result was the necessary consequence of political conditions which only time could alter. In the absence of a party organisation in the Federal Council, the only real parties were the States. If any major State did not have a Minister in the Supreme Council, it feared that its interests would be overlooked – and one could not dismiss this fear as entirely unjustified. Given the present condition of the Federation, it simply was not possible to maintain cohesion by any other system. Hence the existing total of ten members of the Supreme Council – on which basis it would not have been reasonable to expect that Aden would accept less than four, adding up to our unfortunately large total of fourteen.

Meanwhile, in separate discussions with the Aden Ministers only, we had worked out the main shape of the constitutional advance which would take place in the Colony by way of preparation for merger. This will be further described in a later chapter.

The remaining item in our agenda, namely the timing of merger, and certain other points not yet agreed, were reserved for discussion with the Secretary of State in London during July, and the whole agreeement so far reached was subject to approval by the British Government. Meanwhile, its contents were to remain confidential.

In the final discussions Saidi did not explicitly take issue with the understanding reached about Aden's participation at Federal level, but insisted on his point that elections must be held before constitutional advance. His four Aden colleagues made it clear to him and to me that they did not share his view. Saidi said that he would not sign the agreement unless his point was met. I indicated that the signing of the agreement was a matter of principle, and left Saidi to draw the conclusion. He accordingly resigned on 17th May. A few hours' later on that day the agreement was signed by all the other Ministers of both sides. I replaced Saidi as Minister by Sayid Ali Saffi, a respected member of the Aden Legislative Council, and he signed the agreement in Saidi's place a few days later.

Contrary to general expectation the news of Saidi's resignation produced no effect either on the willingness of his colleagues to sign the agreement or on the reaction of the public to the news of its signature. Personally I liked Saidi very much and was sorry to see him go. He had, in fact, weakened himself politically during the last few months, and had to some extent lost touch with the majority of Adenese opinion, which knew through the usual bazaar telegraph the outlines of our confidential agreement and was beginning to understand the strength of the case for merger.

CHAPTER II

Private interlude

The premonition which I felt as I stood on the terrace the night of our ball had lost no time in fulfilling itself.

The first thing that happened was that misfortune struck at friends of ours in the area. Ronald Bailey was continuing his excellent work as our Chargé d'Affaires in Taiz. His tour there had been chequered. Immediately on his arrival a year previously the Imam had told him that he would be expelled unless the Aden Government took certain action to improve its relations with the Yemen. This crisis blew over successfully and, as we have seen (page 81), Ronald was able to take full advantage of the new international situation in order to bring a badly needed improvement into our relationship with our northern neighbour.

It happened that Bailey's son was at the same private school as the son of Ken Trevaskis, British Agent in the Western Protectorate. The two boys were comparing notes at the beginning of the term, and Bailey said: 'My father's in Taiz, he looks after all the Yemenis.' 'Oh, that's nothing,' replied Trevaskis, 'my father's in Aden – and *he* shoots all the Yemenis.' Often in our dealings with the Yemen I had found some divergence between the policy of my parent department, the Foreign Office, which was all in favour of happy diplomatic relations, and that of my temporary employers, the Colonial Office, who were more inclined to think that we should stand pat on our rights. But never have I heard the respective policies of these two great Departments of State more succinctly defined.

In January 1962 Ronald Bailey and Joan, his wife, paid us a short visit in order to discuss various problems of current interest. They returned to Taiz late in the evening and, being tired from the

journey, went straight to bed. In the middle of the night they were wakened by a knocking at the bedroom door. Ronald got up and opened it, to be confronted by a classic nightmare situation: a man with blazing eyes who burst in and set about him with a knife. Luckily the presence of mind which Joan Bailey had learned in the W.R.N.S. came in handy. The assassin had got Ronald on the floor, bleeding heavily from a number of wounds, and was bending over him to finish him off. Joan came up from behind and gave the man such a push that he went flying not only out of the door but down the stairs and did not reappear. She bandaged Ronald up with sheets as best she could, but then had the problem of getting medical help. She remembered that the only telephone in the house was plugged in downstairs; normally at night the Baileys took it up with them and plugged it in in the bedroom, but this time they had been too tired to do so. In the course of the excitement the lights had gone out, and Joan Bailey had the cold-blooded courage to go downstairs, in the dark, not knowing whether the assassin was still lurking in the house, in order to get at the telephone. Soon doctors and diplomatic colleagues were on the scene and the Imam, informed of the situation, offered all possible help.

I heard the story at breakfast time when Stookey, the American Chargé d'Affaires in Taiz, having flown to Aden in one of the Imam's private aircraft, walked out on to the terrace of Government House and told me that he was arranging for a British Service doctor to fly up with blood plasma in the hope of saving Ronald's life. By chance the Principal Medical Officer in the Middle East Command, Air Commodore Bruce Harvey, was an old friend of the Baileys, having served with them in Washington. With the agreement of the Commander-in-Chief Harvey went off in plain clothes in the aircraft and, after examining Bailey, took the bold decision to bring him back to Aden while blood transfusion proceeded. Bailey was installed in the R.A.F. hospital on Barrack Hill, and the skilled care which he there received, coupled with his naturally robust constitution, brought him out of danger in a remarkably short time. Each of a number of deep knife-thrusts had missed a vital target by fractions of an inch. Ronald made

light of the whole affair and said that as soon as he was recovered he would like to return to his post, which the Imam for reasons of 'face' was very anxious he should do. The courage shown by Bailey and his wife in this story is heart-warming and will go down in the annals of the Foreign Service. I am glad to say that the Foreign Office decided not to accede to the Imam's request, and, when he was restored to health, Bailey was transferred to a more peaceful post. He was succeeded in the Yemen by Christopher Gandy.

After being pushed downstairs by Joan Bailey the murderer lost heart and escaped over the wall into the next-door garden. He had managed to bluff his way into the Legation House by pretending to the soldier on guard that he was the bearer of an official telegram for the Chargé d'Affaires. The Imam's police succeeded in catching him, and he turned out to be a well-known thug and criminal nicknamed Qunbula, 'the Bomb'. Qunbula was imprisoned and interrogated for some time, but the motive for the deed was never revealed. The Imam's horror at it was obviously genuine and his Government can certainly be acquitted of complicity. Qunbula did not know Bailey, and there can have been no question of a personal grievance. The whole affair remains a mystery, and the coming of the Yemeni revolution has made it unlikely that it will ever now be solved. It is, however, a grim reminder of the hazards to which British representatives are exposed in this violent and passionate area.

The next blow was nearer home. Before accepting the Aden appointment I had consulted my wife's doctor, who had given us the all-clear. N.'s health had never been robust, but an extraordinary vitality and strength of will enabled her to do things which would tire much stronger people. Nevertheless, for anyone not of tough constitution, the prospect of three years in Aden, even with all its air-conditioning and refrigeration, could be intimidating. My wife immediately understood the attractions of the post and, like the brave warrior-princess that she is, decided to accept the risk. For our first year there she was well, enjoying the job, and making herself beloved by everyone she met.

During the winter we made a tour in the Aulaqi and Wahidi country. Somewhere on this trip – it is best not to know exactly where – my wife picked up an infection of a paratyphoid character known technically as *salmonella* Montevideo. She had to retire to bed in Mukalla and missed our much-looked-forward-to visit to the Wadi Hadhramaut. We got her back to Aden by air and, when treatment there proved ineffectual, the doctors arranged for her to be flown home on a stretcher and enter a nursing home in London. After some weeks there she recovered enough to move out and stay with friends. She was, however, still desperately weak. The plan was that I should use the interlude between the May agreement in Aden, and its discussion in London in July, to take her to the South of France for leave and convalescence.

We went to Nice in June, and I made the following entry in my notebook: 'After months in Aden concentrating on political problems, I now have the great satisfaction of being able to forget them and concentrate on getting N.'s strength back instead. We walk a bit farther every day and laugh at all the old jokes and the extraordinary people tucked away in the different, neatly-labelled drawers of the diplomat's past life. It's the first holiday we have had alone together for years and years.

'She wants to come back with me to Aden when I go, and that will certainly be the best thing, if the doctors will let her – even if it means going back for August and September, which are pretty hellish there. But will the doctors let her? And, if not, what? meaning, in practice, ought I to chuck Aden with effect from this summer, so as to be with her? I could do this without putting myself out of a job, as the Foreign Office would probably find me something to do in London. But it's a difficult one.

'N.'s health matters more to me than anything else. My life is built around her, and she has done everything for me. It tears me to pieces to see her all wasted away, as she is now. In this case I am involved for another reason too. She got the infection on a tour in the Protectorate, where she was as it were on duty and helping me do my job. This puts what is a heart-breaking human problem into cold and dispassionate terms.

'Now for the other side. If it was an ordinary Foreign Service

post, I should have no hesitation whatever in chucking it. But it isn't. I am lent to the Colonial Office for three years to do a specific job in Aden. We are now at the most ticklish point in that process. The first year went in making up my own mind what should be done to meet the wishes of the local Ministers and convincing London of it. The second has been spent in working out the details with the Ministers, and that process too will soon be completed, provided the meeting in London next month goes according to plan. It is then that the third and most difficult year will begin – the time for translating into action what has so far been a paper exercise: the voting in the local parliaments; the boycott by the opposition; processions, demonstrations, perhaps a general strike; police, troops, clashes, the possibility of serious bloodshed. All this in order to put the Johnston plan[1] into effect. "And where actually is Johnston?" "Oh, his wife's health wasn't too good, and he's now Ambassador somewhere in Latin America."

'Put like that, the thing simply isn't on. The third year ought to see the process, if not completed, at least set on the right road. There's no question of my staying for longer than that year – but that much I must quite certainly see out.

'It's complicated, of course, by the fact that I *want* to see the process out. It's not simply a question of duty, and Aden being an important interest, etc.; but of the next stage being tremendous fun and something I should really hate to miss. It's always stimulating when the result of one's backroom efforts emerges from the world of paper and begins to put on substance. The uncertainty and hazards involved appeal to an element of pugnacity in me. But the fact of the whole thing being fun doesn't stop it from also being a duty. And there we are.

'This sounds a bit cold-blooded, but there's an important point to add – nobody can guarantee that N.'s health would be better anywhere else. In fact, I'm sure she would be better off in Aden, with me working in the house, and A.D.C.s and masses of

[1] I used this expression as a convenient shorthand. In fact, as chapter 3 has made clear, the original impetus for the plan came from the Federal and Aden Ministers.

servants to protect her, than in our small flat in London, with the telephone ringing constantly and no one to look after her, except Mo,[1] during all the time when I was away in the office.

'N. had thought the whole thing over before I got back from Aden last month, and had come to the same conclusions, independently.'

After a month in Nice we returned to London, with my wife better but still notably frail. I was immediately plunged into preparation for the last stage of the merger discussions in Whitehall.

[1] See p. 138 below.

CHAPTER 12

Agreement in London

Mr. Macleod had left the Colonial Office in October 1961 and, after a brief period when Mr. Maudling held the post, Mr. Sandys assumed the task of Colonial Secretary, in addition to his duties as Commonwealth Secretary, in July 1962. Under his chairmanship talks with Federal and Colony Ministers started in London on 23rd July with the object of reaching final and complete agreement on the plan for Aden's entry into the Federation.

On the financial side, the proposals worked out in Aden implied that the British Government should provide compensation for the revenues which States would lose if Customs became a Federal subject on Aden's accession. The total involved seemed likely to be nearly £200,000 a year. This commitment was accepted by the British Government, though in cautious terms; they agreed to pay the Federation a special grant of up to £190,000 (or, in certain circumstances, more) in the first year after merger, and in later years 'to take the matter into account when determining the general level of British budgetary assistance for the Federation.' So far as the Colony was concerned, the British Government agreed to make it a special grant of £500,000 payable in instalments over the first three years after merger, in order to meet additional expenditure arising from the transitional period.

I personally had hoped that a greater increase in British financial aid would have been forthcoming in the context of merger. At least, however, no one could seriously claim that Aden was being made to subsidize the Federation.

On the political side the London talks covered two major problems which it had not been possible to solve in Aden.

The first was the question of Aden's right to secede from the

Federation. The difficulty here was to meet the Aden Minister's reasonable requirement that the Colony should not be irrevocably merged with the Federation until elections had been held there, while at the same time safeguarding the cohesion of the existing Federation by doing nothing to facilitate the secession of States other than Aden. It would, of course, have been disastrous if Aden's entry into the Federation should turn out to have weakened the existing Federal structure and opened the way to general secession. After much thought and discussion, this conundrum was solved as follows: during the seventh year after merger, if the Aden Legislative Council should pass a resolution by a two-thirds majority asking for secession, Britain would convene a conference to try to resolve the matter by agreement; failing that, and failing action by the Federation to remedy any steps by it which were regarded as unfairly prejudicing the interests of Aden, Britain might withdraw Aden from the Federation.

This formula was a compromise designed to meet the requirements of the two sides. The six-year period was chosen because in the normal course of events *two* general elections would by then have taken place in Aden since merger, and there would thus be a safeguard against a transient wave of anti-Federal emotion such as might find expression in one general election but not in two successive ones.

The other political question, and the most difficult of all, was that of constitutional advance in the Colony. In the Aden talks it had been agreed to recommend that, in the Federal State of Aden, the Governor should keep responsibility for external affairs, defence, internal security, police and the staffing of the Public Service, but that outside these fields he should act on the advice of a Council of Ministers. This would consist of a Chief Minister, appointed by the Governor as being the member most likely to command majority support in the Legislative Council, not less than six members of the Legislative Council who would be appointed Ministers by the Governor on the Chief Minister's advice, and an English Attorney-General. This transformation of the Governor's Executive Council into a local Council of Ministers would mean that four English *ex officio* members – the Chief

Secretary, the Financial Secretary, the Assistant Chief Secretary (Colony) and the representative of the Commander-in-Chief – would disappear from the Government and therefore also from the Legislative Council; their places in the Legislative Council would have to be taken by local Members selected or elected in some manner to be agreed.

So far the assumption throughout the negotiations had been that constitutional advance in Aden would be introduced some months before merger. It was accepted as a matter of course that the Legislative Council in its existing form, that is to say with the four English *ex officio* members still in it, would have to approve any agreement emerging from the London talks. The question was: should, or should not, the Legislative Council as composed *after* constitutional advance, that is to say with *four new local members* sitting in the places of the four English *ex officio* members, also have the right to vote on the merger plan?

This apparently technical issue produced a serious and fundamental clash of principle. The Federal Ministers thought that a 'second vote' by the Aden Legislative Council should be specifically precluded, as something which could easily realize their recurrent nightmare of Aden getting its constitutional advance and then refusing after all to agree to merger. The Colony Ministers on their side felt that it would be wrong for Aden to be committed irrevocably to merger while still under direct Colonial rule, that is to say, with a Legislative Council containing *ex officio* members, and that some demonstration of free choice by Aden in the period between constitutional advance and merger was politically essential. A prolonged deadlock ensued, and we were all beginning to think that the talks might break down over this point.

The knot was cut at the last moment by a British compromise proposal, based on a new idea: that of synchronizing the major instalment of constitutional advance in Aden with merger, thus eliminating the transitional stage and the 'second vote' altogether, but introducing *before merger* the two most urgently needed features of constitutional advance: the election – by the existing Legislative Council – of four new members, who would sit beside

the four *ex officio* members until merger and then take their place; and the prolongation of the life of the Legislative Council for another year, namely from January 1963 until 1964, in order to allow more time for the necessary revision of the franchise. Besides breaking the political deadlock, this idea also had the great practical advantage of cutting out any interim régime in Aden and thus enabling the machine of government to assume its final form in one jump instead of two.

By this time the talks, under the dynamic chairmanship of the Secretary of State, had been going on day and night for the best part of three weeks. Both sides accepted the compromise proposal with the gratitude of exhaustion.

From the military angle, an important feature of the London settlement was the agreed recognition of the British Government's right to exclude or withdraw from the Federation any area or areas within Aden, at any time, if they considered that desirable for the purposes of their world-wide defence responsibilities. The effect was to make possible, if desired, the establishment of sovereign base areas on the Cyprus pattern. This provision, together with the formula about the withdrawal of Aden from the Federation, and certain technically necessary clauses, was included in a draft Treaty between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Federation providing for the accession of Aden to the Federation by 1st March, 1963.

The agreement was embodied in a letter from the Ministers of the Federation and of Aden to Mr. Sandys enclosing the draft Treaty and a number of technical annexes, together with the Secretary of State's reply. In their letter the Ministers asked the British Government to end the unnatural division between the port of Aden and its hinterland by agreeing to the entry of Aden into the Federation, on terms which would recognize its special political and social institutions and outstanding commercial importance, and also Britain's need of full safeguards for the unfettered operation of its defence installations there. The letter further stated that, on the occasion of Aden's entry into the Federation, a new measure of constitutional advance in the colony would be appropriate. Mr. Sandys' reply accepted the proposals

of the Ministers, subject to approval by Parliament and by the legislatures of the Federation and Aden. It confirmed the declared intention of the British Government to continue giving the Federation financial and technical assistance in developing its economy, and to lead its people as soon as practicable to sovereign independence. Mr. Sandys concluded: 'I am sure you are right in thinking that the added strength which will flow from the accession of Aden will help to advance the time when the Federation will be able to assume the full responsibilities of nationhood.'

The letters, dated 16th August, were published in London and Aden on 20th August.

For me this London chapter was vividly illuminating. I had often been involved in negotiations with foreign governments in foreign capitals. This was my only taste of a colonial negotiation with my own Government in London. The conditions could not have been more difficult. An intensely involved complex of problems had been the subject of expert discussion for eight months in Aden. The points which we had been unable to solve there were the most intractable ones of all. We had, as it were, skimmed the cream off the bucket and brought it to London. On top of this, our negotiations had to be conducted by an entirely new Secretary of State. As if that was not enough, Mr. Sandys was at the same time deeply involved in two major exercises which had nothing to do with our affairs, one about the formation of Malaysia, and the other about the effects of the Common Market project on the countries of the Commonwealth. In spite of these difficulties the Secretary of State and his advisers had brought the negotiations to a successful conclusion. It is not for nothing that London has existed so long as a great imperial capital. The technique of negotiation on colonial matters is practised with an unconscious, intuitive certainty of touch. The solutions found to our problems had that deceptive look of simplicity and commonsense which is the real trademark of the master negotiator. What, for instance, could seem more obvious than the solution of the famous difficulty of the 'second vote'? And yet I knew from the inside what hours of thought and discussion in the Colonial Office had preceded this solution, and how it had at last emerged from an

interminable Saturday afternoon of talks between the Secretary of State and his advisers. The solution finally reached was a composite effort and it was fascinating to watch it spring from the corporate brain of Whitehall.

The wider political aspects of the London settlement will call for comment later on. Technically speaking, the connoisseur of federations could be reasonably pleased with our work. We had not only achieved an agreement incorporating Aden into the Federation. We had used the opportunity to make the Federation stronger at the centre than it had been before in two important respects. Customs revenue passed from the States to the Federation. So also did primary schooling, and the whole of education now became a Federal subject.

The negotiations were held in the present headquarters of the Colonial Office at Church House, Great Smith Street. Situated in the shadow of Westminster Abbey, and designed for ecclesiastical gatherings, Church House has a muted ascetic atmosphere which, brought up in the full-blooded Victorian splendour of the old Foreign Office building, I never managed to find at all congenial.

The discussions had been gruelling. In accordance with the usual Colonial Office practice, the Secretary of State insisted on provisions being made in the new settlement to safeguard and improve the arrangements already existing in Aden for the protection of basic human rights. A long definition of these rights was written into the agreement. The Federal Ministers watched the process with cynical tolerance. Once, about three in the morning, we were sitting in the Conference room at Church House, with Mr. Sandys in the chair, finishing off a complicated piece of drafting. One of the more senior shorthand typists of the Colonial Office at the end of the table was showing signs of fatigue. Suddenly Sultan Saleh, the joker of the party, asked Mr. Sandys through the interpreter if he *really* believed in human rights. The Secretary of State replied that of course he did. 'Then why', asked Sultan Saleh, 'do you keep this unfortunate old lady sitting up all night?' The remark was tactfully toned down by the interpreter.

In fact, the process of intensive negotiation was fully justified

not only as it were in the tactical field, by expediting the conclusion of a satisfactory agreement, but also, as will be seen, in the wider sphere of grand strategy. Our instinctive wish to get on with the negotiations and reach agreement as soon as possible was to be dramatically proved right in the event.

One of the details of the London settlement was that, on merger day, the title 'Governor of Aden' would be altered to 'High Commissioner for Aden and the Protectorate of South Arabia'. This change was made at the request of the Aden Ministers, who felt that the gubernatorial title was out of keeping with the new stage which Aden was to reach on the road of constitutional advance. I agreed with this view and accepted that the change of title was politically necessary. At the same time, I regretted it as a matter of personal taste. 'Governor of Aden' was at least immediately comprehensible. The new formula was not only hard to understand, but I myself had the greatest difficulty even in remembering it. It was like replacing a classical Roman title, brief, lapidary and to the point, with a late Byzantine one, long, honorific, and utterly ambiguous.

CHAPTER 13

Crisis in Aden

I missed the signature ceremony myself, because I wanted to be back in Aden in good time to deal with any excitements which might arise from the news that agreement had been reached in London. My wife had been passed by the doctors as well enough to return with me, and we both flew back on 16th August.

The people of the Federation were already convinced of the advantages of the merger proposals, and there was no question which way the Federal Council would vote when the London Agreement came before it.

In Aden the outlook was much less certain. The Legislative Council's debate on the agreement was fixed to begin on 24th September. It was clear that we were in for a pretty tense five weeks to say the least of it. The merger policy was approved by the Ministers' supporters, who included Bayoomi's United National Party, the second biggest political group in Aden after the A.T.U.C., and by conservative opinion generally, including the leading Muslim divines and most of the merchant and shopkeeper class. Our inquiries at the time indicated that a clear majority of the Adenese were in favour of merger or disposed to acquiesce in it. The situation was, however, complicated by the peculiar local class structure. With the vast increase in Aden's prosperity over recent years, the Adenese had become a minority in their own city. They were broadly speaking people who had bettered themselves and achieved middle-class status in either commercial or government employment. The manual work of Aden – the port, the Forces, the refinery, the building industry, etc. – was carried out by an almost entirely non-Adenese proletariat consisting partly of Protectorate Arabs, partly of Somalis,

but mainly of Yemenis, who amounted to about a third of Aden's total population and constituted a majority in the Aden T.U.C. For years back there had been among the Yemeni workers a profound unrest which attached itself sometimes to industrial grievances and sometimes to political issues, and which had been skilfully exploited by the Aden T.U.C. leaders. The workers' susceptibility to extremist influences, often more damaging to their own interests than to ours, was due basically to their too swift transition from the closely-knit tribal society of their homeland to a new urban life in Aden outside the traditional framework. The unsettling effect of this move was increased by the non-Adenese worker's dissatisfaction with the inferior status in which he found himself owing to his non-resident, non-voting position in Aden. On the merger issue this deep-lying hostility was inflamed by Pan-Arab propaganda from Cairo urging the people of Aden not to merge with the 'imperialist puppets' of the Federation. Yet another potent cause of unrest would shortly be contributed by developments in the Yemen itself.

In fact, the leaders of the Aden T.U.C. would have opposed any solution agreed between the British, Federal and Aden Governments. In essence the main arguments which they quoted against the London settlement were, as regards merger, that this should be with a Yemeni Republic and not with a 'feudal' Federation; and, as regards constitutional advance in Aden, that this was simply building on the Constitution of 1958, which they had never recognized, and that the right course would be to scrap the whole edifice and start again with elections based on a franchise which should be widened to include all the Yemenis in Aden.

Already the Aden T.U.C. and its recently established political wing, the People's Socialist Party, had indicated the strength of their opposition by a partially successful one-day general strike called on 23rd July in protest against the opening of the London talks. As the A.T.U.C. had boycotted the 1959 elections and was therefore not represented in the Legislative Council, its resistance would plainly be exerted outside the framework of the law, and was likely to set us ticklish problems in the field of internal security.

So far as the local press was concerned the merger policy was

supported by the Bayoomi brothers' daily *Al Kifah* and by the independent papers of Mohammed Basharaheel, although later these were to turn against it. The Luqman press was strongly opposed to the policy. I found the Luqmans an interesting group. The father of the family and head of the newspaper empire, Mohammed Ali, was a vigorous old gentleman who from time to time gave me a cunning game of tennis at his club in Crater. I had a high opinion of his son Ali, who headed the moderate opposition to the merger plan in the Legislative Council. Another son, Abdul Rahim, was the successful headmaster of Aden College, and a daughter was married to Sayid Mohammed Ghanem, Director of Education and prominent as a scholar and poet. I liked them all as a family, and agreed strongly with their liberal ideas, especially about the crying need to improve the situation of women in Aden. But I could not help feeling that the hostile attitude of their papers towards merger was mistaken, and based more on antipathy to Bayoomi than on real opposition to the principle of joining the Federation.

For the period before the Legislative Council debate on the London Agreement, the path which the Government must follow, though difficult, was perfectly clear. We must bend over backwards to allow free debate among Adenese. In particular, we must give the opposition every reasonable opportunity of expressing its views at public meetings. At the same time, we must treat law-breaking and disorder with the utmost firmness. In any case we must not allow this crucial discussion of Aden's future to be bedevilled by transient Yemeni labourers who enjoyed no freedom of political expression under the régime then existing in their own country.

I should explain that public meetings could legally be held anywhere in the Colony, provided the agreement of the Police Commissioner was first obtained. We followed the policy of allowing the P.S.P. one public meeting in each of the main quarters of Aden during the period before the vote. We took the same line with the only other major party which applied for such permission, namely Bayoomi's United National Party.

Processions through the streets also required authorization from the Police Commissioner. These presented more of a threat to security than public meetings did, in view of the danger of their getting out of hand and leading to arson, looting and bloodshed, as they had been known to do in the past. In view of this I decided that no processions by any party should be authorized until further notice, and this was publicly and repeatedly announced. In a reaction of defiance, Asnag appealed to every man, woman and child in Aden to join a general march on the Legislative Council building on 24th September by way of protest against the merger plan.

It was not long before tension began to grow. The case for merger was explained by Ministers in a carefully planned campaign of talks over the Aden radio. At the same time, Asnag was putting the opposition view at his authorized public meetings, which were attended by large and excited crowds. The alignment was not P.S.P. *versus* Government, but P.S.P. *versus* United National Party and the propertied classes. This situation was full of potential dangers – a clash between P.S.P., supported by Yemeni thugs, and U.N.P., supported by Protectorate thugs, could easily lead to general rioting and looting. On the night of 3rd September, after a P.S.P. meeting, Asnag and some of his supporters shocked Muslim opinion by breaking into the mosque of a leading Federalist divine, the blind Sheikh Beihani. Prosecuted for the undoubtedly illegal procession in which they had marched to the mosque, Asnag and two of his leading associates were convicted on 15th September and sentenced to two weeks' imprisonment. Undeterred by this, the P.S.P. went ahead with its plans for a general march on the Legislative Council building on 24th September. Meanwhile, the Government were making it clear to the public that they would not allow the opposition to break the law either on 24th September or at any other time. Realistic security exercises were held in Aden on 13th and 21st September. The licence of thepro-P.S.P. newspaper *Al Haqiqa* was suspended, following an issue containing incitement to violence against the Qadi, the chief religious dignitary of Aden. Leaders of three illegal processions were prosecuted. Public opinion outside

the P.S.P. welcomed these measures and supported the Government's determination to maintain law and order.

At the same time, a more disturbing factor was beginning to emerge. The opposition were conducting a deliberate campaign of threats and intimidation against individual members of the Legislative Council, and it seemed possible that this would critically weaken the Government majority when the merger plan came to be voted on. An overall majority in favour of it could be relied on with the help of the five Ministers, the five English *ex officio* members, and the two English nominated members. Politically, however, it was essential that the opposition should not be able to gain a majority of the *local* members. If they did so, it would be impossible in practice to justify proceeding with the merger plan. The total Legislative Council membership was twenty-three – sixteen local members (twelve elected and four nominated) plus the seven English. When the London agreement was published, Bayoomi's estimate had been that, of the sixteen local members, ten, i.e. the five Ministers and five others, would vote for the merger, and six would vote against it. As a result of opposition intimidation, there was now reason to fear that this majority would be dangerously whittled down. In such small Assemblies, individual defections have quite disproportionate results. In fact, only two members would have to change sides in order to bring about a deadlock.

The early morning of 24th September was marked by a nearly complete general strike and by noisy demonstrations, mainly in the Crater area adjoining the Legislative Council building. An Arab police officer set upon by a mob had to use his revolver in self-defence, and two men were wounded. Demonstrations continued in Crater throughout the morning and the police had to use tear-gas to disperse the crowds. Shortly after noon three platoons of British troops were deployed in aid of the civil power. The demonstrators, mainly Yemeni supporters of the P.S.P., did not total more than three thousand at any one time, but their determination and fanaticism were thoroughly alarming to the peaceful citizens of Crater. There were not enough police and troops to garrison all points which might prove to be targets

for attack. Taking advantage of this, demonstrators burned two cars outside the Crater headquarters of Bayoomi's United National Party, and set fire to the nearby *Al Kifah* Press, belonging to Bayoomi's brother. Other rioters tore up watermains in Crater and a small area was flooded. Towards evening the police were obliged to fire a few shots at a gang who were looting a stall in the Crater market square. Five demonstrators were wounded, two fatally; and the mob dispersed.

The next two days were tense, but free of major disturbances. At the opening of the debate in the Legislative Council Bayoomi had tabled a motion of support for the London Agreement, and the opposition had put down an amendment disagreeing with this motion. At lunch-time on 26th September a vote was taken on the opposition amendment. It was defeated by sixteen votes to seven; in terms of local members, by nine to seven, and of elected members by seven to five (the four local nominated members being evenly divided between the two sides). The seven opposition members then walked out of the Council, indicating that they would take no further part in the debate. One Government supporter who had voted against the opposition amendment said that he had been so insulted by the opposition that he too would no longer participate in the proceedings. Bayoomi's motion approving the London Agreement was then passed unanimously by those remaining in the Chamber, totalling fifteen in all – eight local members, and seven English.

The methods used by the opposition had been unscrupulous. The mob action of 24th September was certainly designed to disrupt the Legislative Council's proceedings and only failed to do so thanks to vigorous action by the Security Forces. In addition, there was a good deal of personal intimidation; for example, during the debate the wives of two Ministers were rung up anonymously and told that their husbands were in hospital or dead. By these methods the opposition had succeeded in obtaining one defection from the pro-Government ranks. One more would have left the local members evenly divided in the voting on the opposition amendment, and would have made it politically difficult for the Government to proceed. It was certainly a narrow escape.

CHAPTER 14

Revolution in Yemen

There was another sense too in which the Legislative Council's vote on merger turned out to be a close shave. In the Yemen the Imam Ahmed had died on 19th September. Age and disease had succeeded where so many conspiracies had failed. It remained to be seen what would become of this turbulent country without the iron hand which had ruled it for the last fifteen years. The answer to this question was not long delayed.

In accordance with his declared wish, the old Imam was succeeded by his son Prince Badr. Early on 27th September, less than twenty-four hours after the Aden Legislative Council's decision, the new Imam was overthrown by a military coup of nationalist type.

This development, representing as it seemed the replacement of a reactionary monarchy by a left-wing Pan-Arab republic, was greeted with wild joy among the Yemenis in Aden and among the nationalist circles associated with them. To the opposition it came as a godsend. The union of Aden with the Yemen had been their only alternative to the policy of merger with the Federation. So far it had obviously been an unpractical one, presupposing as it did revolutions in both the Yemen and Aden before it could be realized. Now the Yemeni revolution had happened, and the opposition at last had a real working alternative to the merger plan. All that was needed now was revolution in Aden – and the opposition plan could be put into effect. Simultaneously supporters of the Government's policy were filled with alarm and foreboding.

If the Yemeni revolution had come one day earlier, or the Legislative Council vote one day later, I feel pretty certain that the London Agreement would never have obtained the support

of a majority of local members. In the new atmosphere at least one more Government supporter would have defected to the opposition. Although grim to look back on, the closeness of this shave at least justified retrospectively our instinctive sense of urgency over the whole merger exercise, as expressed in the driving, work-against-the-clock principle which I had tried to impose during the Aden talks, and which had been carried to a very high point during the London discussions under the chairmanship of Mr. Sandys. One less midnight session in Church House, and the plan might not have gone through at all. It is a solemn thought!

But the situation in Aden was to get much worse before it got better. In my view the restraint shown by the police and troops on 24th September had been absolutely right. It achieved with a minimum of bloodshed our object of safeguarding the Legislative Council debate from interruption. Nevertheless, when the debate ended, the opposition could claim that their extra-constitutional drive against the merger had not been decisively defeated in the streets. At the same time their ruthless campaign of personal intimidation was continuing to produce results. In this situation both Colony and Federal Ministers were extremely critical of what they considered to be the undue leniency shown by the Aden Police in dealing with the opposition both on 24th September, and at other times – a criticism which I flatly refused to accept.

I had hoped that, once the merger proposals were approved by the Legislative Council, we could have moved on to a period of reconciliation and acceptance. Unfortunately the Yemeni revolution had for the time being killed any such prospect. It added to the triumph of the opposition and the depression of our friends. So far the problems of Aden and the Protectorate had been mainly parochial ones. Sheltered from the rest of Arabia by the dense curtain of the Imam's Yemen, we had been spared the full blast of Pan-Arab nationalism. The Yemeni revolution brought its bugles on to our doorstep.

On 27th September the Federal Council, as expected, approved the London proposals. Constitutional action at our end was now completed, but this fact did nothing to relieve the tension. In

Aden and even in the Federation nationalist emotion was on the rampage. The opposition's intention was plain: to produce, by violence and intimidation, such conditions in Aden that the British House of Commons, which was due to debate the London Agreement in mid-November, would decide that it must be abandoned. That being so, the only course open to us was to continue enforcing the law with vigour, in the full knowledge that this might precipitate a clash with the opposition, which in turn would require the declaration of a State of Emergency – possibly even, at worst, a suspension of the Aden Constitution.

Nevertheless, even at the darkest period in October, I felt able to assure London that we had plenty of good cards in our hand. One was the fear and dislike of the predominantly middle-class Adenese for the revolutionary Yemeni element in the opposition. Secondly, bouts of nationalist excitement of the type that we were experiencing are in Arab countries seldom sustained with the same enthusiasm for any length of time. Thirdly, while a Pan-Arab, Egyptian-controlled Republic in the Yemen would certainly be a serious threat to Aden, my past experience suggested to me that, in that particular form, the Yemeni Republic would not be likely to last long.

The situation would certainly improve with time. Bayoomi was determined to see the plan through. He and his colleagues had been through a fierce ordeal: a year of negotiations, first the long slog in Aden, then the tense and difficult climax in London; next the autumn crisis in Aden, with the full blast of the opposition's intimidation campaign directed against them personally and their families. Bayoomi's health, so far as one could judge superficially, seemed to be standing up adequately to the test. I thought it important to get the other four Ministers out of the strained Aden atmosphere at the first opportunity. Basendwa was sent off to represent Aden at the Uganda Independence celebrations. Joshi travelled to Delhi for discussions with the Indian Government, then to Nigeria to represent Aden at a meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Husseiny left for London to discuss the future of television in Aden. At the airport he muttered to the press about the need to suspend the merger policy – in

spite of the fact that he had voted for it on 26th September. I had much personal sympathy for Husseiny. Living, unlike his colleagues, in the turbulent Sheikh Othman area, the Yemeni quarter of Aden, he had been subjected to very heavy pressures. In addition he was of Yemeni descent and therefore susceptible to the emotional pull which the Republican régime in its early days certainly exercised on the Yemeni diaspora.

During this time our relations with the Federal Ministers were going through a difficult phase. A delegation of them visited London early in October to express to the Colonial Secretary their concern about the Yemeni situation and also about the state of internal security in Aden. They returned reassured by their talks with Mr. Sandys, but this effect unfortunately wore off very soon. The Federal Ministers saw a real possibility that our attachment to democratic procedures would make us powerless to deal with the opposition threat in Aden, and that therefore the winds of change might have us out of the area, whether we liked it or not, in double quick time. Opinion not only in Aden but throughout the Federation was sliding towards the Yemeni Republic. The climax came on 22nd October, when an aircraft from the Yemen raided Beihan, causing damage to houses and killing a child. This raid subsequently proved to have been a mistake, but our refusal to retaliate in kind was universally interpreted by local opinion as a symptom of British weakness.

One of the worst things for me personally about the autumn crisis was the feeling that I was myself responsible for a sudden worsening of conditions which might well lose us Aden. I never doubted that our policy was right, and deep within myself I knew that all would turn out well in the end. But there were a few days when the normal smooth surface of life in Aden looked particularly hollow to my eyes. At breakfast on the terrace, I watched the big ships coming in, picking up their pilots, hooting to their tugs, exactly as if nothing was wrong. How much longer can this normal appearance go on for, I asked myself? How soon will the ghastly secret be out? I forced myself to go to Khormaksar Races and put my most smiling and impermeable face on. What I dreaded most about it was meeting people in the inner ring –

top Service officers, one or two of the leading British businessmen – who would know just how bad things had really become under my management. Would they speak to me at all? Would I not be ostracized as the leader who had failed? When they came up and talked and joked in an absolutely normal way, as if nothing was wrong, I was astonished and overjoyed. For those in the inner circle, this was an act, just as much as it was for me. They knew it, and I knew it, and the thought of our being in the act together brought me a feeling of solidarity and comfort.

In adversity the support of one's English friends and subordinates is one of the most moving and melting things that one can experience. There is an unshakable steadiness about it; also a trick of conveying sympathy and loyalty in a wordless way, which may in fact be due to laziness or embarrassment, but which gives the impression of extreme delicacy and sensibility. All that the top man has to do in return at such times is to appear in public grinning and cracking idiotic jokes – not very exacting, perhaps, but absolutely essential. It does not signify how good you are at anything else, at all the rest of the job; if you cannot manage these histrionics when required, you are useless. Personally, I never had much difficulty about it – not because I am brave, or naturally stiff about the upper lip – but because no one can spend twenty-five years in diplomacy without learning something about what Gibbon called the arts of dissimulation.

Throughout this period there was something which I knew and which our opponents and many of our friends had forgotten: the underlying determination of the British Government to retain the Aden base, and to carry through the policy which they had approved.

This was confirmed to me in London towards the end of October when I was summoned there for a few days' consultation. At the same time the Secretary of State agreed to lend us Nigel Morris, Deputy Inspector-General of Colonial Police, and formerly Commissioner of Police in Singapore, as Director of Security in Aden for the period of the crisis. Morris had paid us a visit shortly before and I had been much impressed by his calm judgement, his tact with local Ministers, his authority

inside the police fraternity and his instinctive understanding of police morale. He joined us at once, and at the same time I appointed Bayoomi as 'Ministerial Adviser on Security', with the object both of increasing his prestige and status in Aden, and of preparing him for the responsibilities of Chief Minister. Under the vigorous co-operation of Bayoomi and Morris, a new and more effective security machine came into being in the Colony.

Once equipped with this, we lost no time in launching a Government counter-offensive designed to restore public confidence. The first move came late in October, when Yemeni and Protectorate ringleaders of an illegal and frivolous strike by the Port Labour Union were rounded up and immediately deported. This display of determination by the Government coincided with reports from the Yemen of the first Royalist successes in the eastern part of the country and of naked Egyptian domination over the Republic, all of which produced a sobering effect on the nationalistic and pro-Republican opposition in Aden.

CHAPTER 15

The merger

About this time Abdulla Saidi's death from heart failure in London deprived the opposition of one of its leading figures. With his jolly manner and humble origin, Saidi had made a popular, extrovert figurehead for the intellectual Luqman group that stood behind him; he had also provided some sort of bridge between that group and the Aden T.U.C. The negotiations, and the personal crisis of his own resignation, had taken a lot out of Abdulla. He had been to see me once since he left the Government, and I had been shocked at the physical difference in him. He seemed to have shrunk; it was as if his substance was pouring out of him in sweat. Personally I shared in the widespread feeling of sorrow at the premature death of this honest, likeable, puzzled man.

The opposition, inevitably, started a story that Saidi had been poisoned by the English. I knew the Adenese well enough by now to be sure that they would not believe such nonsense for more than a few days. At Bayoomi's suggestion, the Government gave the widow an *ex gratia* grant of £5,000 – a piece of generosity that was also good politics.

Early in November the police took swift action to seize all copies of an intimidatory pamphlet issued by the P.S.P. about the events of 24th September. The subsequent investigation of the affair led to the arrest of Asnag and two associates and their sentencing on 21st December to imprisonment on a charge of sedition. Asnag's sentence of one year was reduced to eight months on appeal to the Chief Justice in Aden, and would later be quashed by the East African Court of Appeal. In the meantime, however, in April 1963, Asnag would be released as a result of a

general remission of sentences granted by the new Aden Government on the occasion of the merger. The loss of his leadership during the winter months proved a serious setback to the P.S.P. cause.

On 13th November the House of Commons approved the merger plan. We had been prepared for further demonstrations and rioting in Aden on this occasion, but in fact the opposition reaction to it proved feeble. A belief had grown up in Aden that in the Parliamentary debate the British Government would announce that they had decided to put the merger plan into cold storage; confirmation of this was seen in Husseiny's declarations to the press in London – to the effect that, unless the plan was deferred, he would resign – which were widely regarded as having tacit British approval. This assumption proved useful to us in that, when the British Government's decision to proceed with the plan was reaffirmed in the House of Commons debate, our opposition was surprised and thrown into disarray. In terms of Aden politics, the only result of the House of Commons vote was the resignation of Husseiny while still in London. None of his colleagues showed any disposition to follow him.

On the eve of the Westminster debate a lawyer from London who had been brought out to Aden by the A.T.U.C. to advise them on pending prosecutions visited Asnag in prison and happened to witness the caning of a number of prisoners – including some trade-unionists – who had insisted on going on hunger-strike and work strike in defiance of repeated warnings from the Superintendent. This measure of prison discipline produced an emotional effect in the British press when described in the House of Commons debate. I had the matter thoroughly investigated, and established that the Superintendent, a senior Adenese official of Arab-Somali extraction, had ordered the canings to avert a riot in the prison. Whether or not his apprehension on this score was justified, there is no doubt that it was genuine; indeed he had gone so far as to blow the alarm siren in the prison in order to summon the Armed Police from their barracks next door. Under the regulations as they stood, he was fully entitled to do what he did, and there was no reason whatever why either Ali Saffi, as the

Minister responsible for the prison, or I, as Governor, should have been consulted first.

I should like to add a word of comment about this episode by way of counter-attack against criticisms which it provoked. I dislike corporal punishment as much as anybody. Whatever the reaction of the victims, I think it is bad for the people who inflict it, and also I deplore the effect of sadistic titillation which it seems to produce on so much of the newspaper-reading public. There are, however, certain requirements for which no better remedy has yet been devised. Prison riots among passionate Eastern peoples can be terrifying things, and it is essential that those in charge should have enough authority to enable them to maintain order and prevent mutiny. Given the violent character of many prison inmates, this object cannot be assured without power to inflict fairly drastic forms of punishment. Such power certainly acts as a preventer of bloodshed and a saver of lives. What it amounts to is that those who criticize corporal punishment in this context are coddling their own consciences at the expense of reality. Prisons ought not to exist at all, they think; or if they do exist, there ought not be any danger of riot in them; or if there is such a danger, it should be averted by some means other than corporal punishment. How, then? Oh, that is nothing to do with me and my conscience.

Meanwhile, the merger plan had been strongly criticized in the United Nations as well as in the House of Commons. The Anti-Colonialism Committee in New York had received petitions from various opposition groups in Aden and had listened to a long denunciation of the merger by Mohammed Ali Luqman, the leader of the small intellectual group of anti-federalists. The Federal Government decided that their case should not be allowed to go by default, and they accordingly sent Mohammed Farid, who had recently left the Ministry of Finance to take on the new post of Federal Minister for External Affairs, to speak for them in New York. He explained the advantages of the merger policy with moderation and good sense. After the meeting he was seen having coffee in the Delegates' Lounge with Sheikhan Habshi, one of the leaders of the extreme nationalist South Arabian League,

who had been forced to leave Aden some years before and was now living in Cairo. The two were old friends, but their amicable reunion deeply shocked some of the members of the Anti-Colonialism Committee. 'You two are not supposed to be on speaking terms,' said an indignant delegate from behind the Iron Curtain. Indeed, the enjoyable complexities of South Arabian politics seemed to be rather too much for the anti-colonialist leaders in New York to fathom. Seeing Colonial problems, as they did, in over-simplified terms, their assumption had been that Asnag must be Aden's Nkrumah or Mboya, and that they need really not bother about any other local leaders. The spectacle of a youthful and highly intelligent Minister speaking convincingly on behalf of what was supposed to be a stooge Government, and then happily reuniting with one of the extreme nationalist leaders from the area, left them astonished and disconcerted. According to their script, this was not at all the way things ought to go.

A general strike called by the A.T.U.C. on 19th November by way of protest against the vote in Parliament proved a relative failure, and the A.T.U.C. leaders embarked on searching internal discussions to discover how they could best regain the initiative. We had no intention whatever of allowing them to do so. It was clear that the temperature in Aden had gone right down again. A visit which the Secretary of State made to us on 1st and 2nd December went off smoothly and without the slightest sign of hostile demonstration. Mr. Sandys had talks with representatives of all parties in the Colony, which contributed towards the general relaxation of tension. His discussions with Federal Ministers were happy, and accelerated their return to their normal co-operative relationship with us.

In this atmosphere Bayoomi and I judged that the time had come to proceed with the election of the four new members of the Legislative Council to replace the English *ex officio* members. Under the London settlement this election, which was to be by the Legislative Council itself, had to be carried out as soon as practicable after that Council had approved the merger plan. It had however been quite obvious that, if we had tried to hold the

election in October or November, opposition intimidation would have prevented any candidates at all from presenting themselves. As an essential part of the London Agreement, this election would, I thought, provide a good indication of the real Adenese reaction to the merger plan. The opposition evidently thought the same, and made a determined effort to get the election boycotted. In fact, when it was held on 17th December, no less than *51* candidates were competing for the *four* seats – a surprising figure in any case, but all the more so, first, because of the opposition's boycott campaign; and, secondly, because even at the last general election in 1959 only *31* people had presented themselves for the *12* seats then available. The candidates who now came forward represented a broad cross-section of Adeni society, and the quantity in which they appeared was to my mind a dramatic confirmation of the widespread support for the merger plan which existed among the Adenese and was ready to show itself once the threat of intimidation had been removed.

Most, but not all, of the opposition members in the Legislative Council boycotted the election. I thought it best to arrange that the four outgoing English *ex officio* members should not take part in it either, so that nobody could maintain afterwards that the four new members were partly elected by 'Colonialist' votes. The four elected were solid representatives, drawn from different sections of society, but all of them in favour of the merger plan – in fact, a triumphant result for Bayoomi and his supporters. Immediately after the election I informed him in confidence that, given the new composition of the Legislative Council, I regarded him as the member most likely to command majority support in it, and therefore intended to choose him as Chief Minister when the time for merger came.

This had to be by 1st March anyhow; but the way was now clear for us to effect it earlier – and the sooner, the better. Mid-January was selected as the time.

By now it was publicly evident that the London Agreement was going to be put into effect. Opinion in Aden had come to accept it as an accomplished fact. The conviction of Asnag and his two associates was received calmly, and the latest form of

A.T.U.C. protest, namely a much-heralded policy of mass resignation by workers from their jobs, petered out ineffectually. There was no reaction either when on 7th January Ali Hussein Qadi, President of the A.T.U.C. and secretary of the Government and Local Government Employees' Union, was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for inciting workers to take part in the abortive general strike of 19th November. The heart had gone out of the opposition for the time being.

The final processes of merger went through in an atmosphere of quiet and indeed of anticlimax. On 16th January, at a ceremony in Al Ittihad, the Chairman of the Supreme Council and I, representing the Federal and British Governments, signed the Treaty which had been drafted in London last August. The next day the Orders providing for Aden's entry into the Federation were made by the Queen in Council, and at the same time the necessary new Royal instructions were issued. Merger day itself was 18th January. Then the amended Federal Constitution took effect, and Aden acceded to the Federation. Simultaneously constitutional advance in Aden came into force, and the title of Governor was changed to that of High Commissioner for Aden and the Protectorate of South Arabia.

As at the end of a long novel, it remains to relate briefly the fate of the principal characters in the merger story.

The Federal Ministers remained in office with only minor reshuffles. I have not mentioned the part played by them individually in these events, but I had acquired great respect for the realistic and statesmanlike attitude which inspired their dealings with the Aden representatives throughout the discussions. Unlike some of the Aden Ministers, they all wholeheartedly supported the policy of merger; nevertheless, the London settlement was not easy for all of them to swallow, particularly in view of its tendency to strengthen the authority of the Federation and diminish the position of the States, for example, by the abolition of State Customs systems.

The Federal Constitution as amended to fit the London agreement required the appointment of four Adenese Ministers to the Supreme Council. The selection of these four raised serious

complications. The final choice was the following: Bayoomi, Minister without Portfolio (as well as being Chief Minister of Aden); Sayid Omar Shibab, a member of the Legislative Council who had voted in favour of merger, Minister of Finance; Abdul Rahman Girgirah, who was Bayoomi's deputy in the United National Party, and had been elected as one of the four new members in December, Minister of Education; Abubaker Koadel, another new Member (nominated in place of Ali Saffi), Minister for Posts and Telegraphs. Bayoomi's three colleagues in the Supreme Council were thus all men without previous ministerial experience.

Constitutionally speaking, I had no say in the selection of the Federal Ministers from Aden. This was entirely a matter for arrangement among the Federal and Aden Ministers themselves. The only constitutional requirement was that the Federal Council (i.e. the Assembly of the Federation) at its next session should elect the Ministers; they were now being provisionally appointed in anticipation of that process. It was, however, deeply disappointing to me that this machinery did not bring Federal office to Joshi, who had made a vigorous and effective Minister under the old régime in Aden and had put all his considerable qualities of head and heart into the negotiations. Basendwa for his part declined for the present to serve either in the Federal or in the Aden State Government. He badly needed a rest after the strain of the last few months, but would in fact return to office later. Saffi, who had always been a reluctant politician, abandoned public life in order to direct the preparations for an independent Electricity Authority which was to be set up in Aden. Husseiny's post had remained unfilled since his resignation in November; he was still in opposition, but on good personal terms with Bayoomi.

Aden's new Council of Ministers comprised two members of the Legislative Council who had voted with Bayoomi against the opposition amendment in September, Khodabux Khan and Joseph Salole – a Somali Christian whose presence in the Government showed the minorities that they were not forgotten; one member who had voted with the opposition on that occasion but had since changed his attitude, Mustafa Abdo; and three of the new spec-

ially elected members of the Legislative Council, all personal friends and supporters of Bayoomi, Sayid Zein Baharoon, Ali Basahai, and Abdul Hamid Ghanem. The team was completed by an energetic and well-liked English Attorney-General, Michael Maloney. (I stick to my use of the word 'English' as a term of art; never in fact was there a jurist who more definitely came from John Bull's Other Island!)

Thus only one of the group of Aden Ministers who had negotiated the merger stayed on in office after merger day, namely Bayoomi himself. Throughout the difficult autumn period he had shown exemplary fortitude. For several weeks after the rioting on 24th September, his party support had practically melted away. Now that his endurance had reaped its reward, he showed an engaging moderation in victory. Under his leadership the new Council of Ministers at once struck a liberal and positive note in their dealings with the Aden T.U.C. Reconciliation was now Bayoomi's main theme: with the opposition in Aden, on the basis of merger as an accomplished fact; with the rulers and Ministers of the old Federation, on the principle that, whatever the differences between Aden and its hinterland, the new Federation must be given the best possible start.

CHAPTER 16

A day at Government House

Even in the most dramatic times one has to live. It makes a curious contrast with this exciting period to remember the routine of life at Government House. As I have described it here, it is placid enough, and that is how I remember it. Mercifully, I have already forgotten the feeling of strain and pressure, and could no longer reproduce this if I tried. Yet that feeling was with us all the time. To convey it accurately, the leisure moments of the day should be imagined as punctuated with messages brought in by grim-faced A.D.C.s – an intertribal skirmish in the Protectorate, a Ministerial resignation brewing up in Aden, a strange and dangerous new development in the Yemen.

This chapter contains a lot of pedestrian detail. Any reader not interested in the *cuisine intérieure* of Government Houses is advised to skip it.

I am awoken brusquely at quarter past six by Mo stamping in, drawing back the curtains and opening the shutters.

Mo, otherwise Haj Aboudi, has been with me as servant and resident philosopher for the last twenty years. He is an Egyptian from Luxor – portly, getting on for sixty, and very holy since he made the pilgrimage to Mecca. At the same time he has the most infectious smile and laugh, and the gift of saying excruciatingly funny things, in English or Arabic, in a high-pitched, falsely timid sort of voice which comes oddly out of his thick-set body and bullet head. When we were in Jordan and preparing to come to Aden, I was advised not to bring an Egyptian servant with me, as that would create difficulties from the point of view of the Immigration Department, and also cause a minor revolution among the servants of Government House, who are paid by the

Aden Government and remain at their posts no matter how many Governors may come and go. On the strength of this advice, I sent Mo off for a sabbatical year to his family in Egypt. During that period I was able to sort things out with the Immigration Department and to prepare the way with the staff at Government House by explaining to them that Mo would simply be my personal servant and would not impinge in any way on their jealously guarded hierarchy. When the time came there was some difficulty about his exit permit, but with help of the Cairo Embassy we managed to get him to Aden just in time for Princess Alexandra's visit. In his brand-new tarboosh and striped *galabiyah* or Egyptian nightgown he was one of the star turns of the party as he stood grinning at his post of duty behind the Princess' chair.

It is a delicious morning early in November. The hot season is over, and for the last few days we have been able to sleep with the windows open and the air-conditioning switched off. I put on a pair of bathing pants and go down the private staircase at the seaward end of the house, out on to the terrace where my breakfast is being laid, then down the short, sharp cinder-track to the beach, through a door in a fence marked 'Private – Governor's Pool', out along a jetty, and straight into beautiful clear sea-water. It has an agreeable nip in it as the sun has only just cleared the roof of Government House. Straight across the bay, however, the peaks of the Little Aden Peninsula have already got the light full on them; they look reddish-black and very solid. Away to the right, inland, the mountains of the Protectorate appear out of the haze going up in a sort of staircase towards the Yemeni frontier. One normally only sees them in the early morning or just before sunset; otherwise they are hidden in the mists.

The pool gives me a marvellous feeling of release from care. All the troubles of merger, and the Yemen, and Aden politics, and Federal politics, which have come back into my head since I woke up, are swept away for those voluptuous minutes of swimming round inside the shark-net. Then up again for breakfast on the terrace, with a pair of field-glasses beside me to watch the ships going in and out. At this angle, the channel looks very narrow, with the port- and starboard-hand buoys apparently right on top

of each other. Upstairs to get dressed – tropical suit minus coat – and down about half past seven to my office.

Tony Boyle, the senior A.D.C., comes in and sits opposite me at the desk, and we run through various invitations and social points that have come up, then have a look at my day's programme. The tradition in Aden is that the Governor's senior A.D.C. and Private Secretary – in our case, Philip Boys-Stones, then Boyle – is provided by the R.A.F., and that the second one is found from the Army units in Aden – in our case, James Daly of the Eleventh Hussars, then Adam Stavert and Tim Sewell of the King's Own Scottish Borderers. All five of them served us admirably, and reduced Government House to the condition of a purring Rolls-Royce.

Half an hour of dictation to my secretary, the imperturbable and efficient Kathleen Poole. Then, while the morning is still young and before the sun has got too hot, a Treaty Ruler comes to pay me his formal annual visit. A gun salute is fired from Fort Morbut, next door, on the dot of the hour, while the Sultan inspects an Armed Police guard of honour drawn up in the courtyard. I receive him in the red-tiled entrance hall, dominated by Queen Victoria, and lead him into the big drawing-room, where the fans are whirring overhead and coffee and fresh lime await us. The procedure is always the same. Pleasantries are exchanged, and after fifteen minutes the Sultan rises to go. At this point, as if it had only just occurred to me, I inform my visitor that it will give me great pleasure if he will accept, as a personal gift from me, five rifles and five boxes of ammunition. The Sultan thanks me for this offer with a gesture of surprise. The whole thing has been repeated year after year since Queen Victoria's time, but the convention of spontaneity is carefully observed.

Next, a telephone conference with N. upstairs about some of the day's arrangements; then an adjournment to the big armchairs at one end of my office for discussion of port-and-oil politics with Tommy Thomson, chairman of the Port Trust, and Alex Shearer, general manager of the Refinery. These two Scots, brick-red from long years of tropical service, represent with granitic fidelity the interests which they serve. As those interests

are by no means always identical, a certain amount of care is required in sorting matters out. They are each deeply conscious of the Arab stake in the causes which they defend.

About one-fifteen I pack up my papers and go to lunch with my wife and the guests staying in the house. One of the chief attractions of the job in Aden was that Government House functioned as an admirable machine for entertainment. Even the most difficult official visitors became a pleasure to put up. And a mass of old and new friends kept us in touch with what was going on at home and in other parts of the Orient – a very necessary function, because the job of Governor is strongly parochializing, and narrows as intensely as it absorbs.

From Singapore a steady flow of visitors gave us a picture of the merger plan taking shape there – so like our own in many ways, but on a bigger scale, and complicated by racial problems which we were mercifully spared. Aidan and Virginia Crawley whizzed through once or twice and gave us a general mental shake-up. Billy McLean, fresh from journalistic missions in the Royalist-held part of the Yemen, brought with him a romantic aroma of mystery, and practically had the A.D.C.s sending messages to each other in code. Sir Bernard Reilly, the last Resident and first Governor of Aden, still warmly remembered as the father of the Colony, came out to stay one winter and recalled to us the days when Aden was first and foremost a fortress – when, so far from any activity being undertaken in the Protectorate, no building was even allowed in the now highly metropolitan Ma'alla area, in order to leave a clear field of fire for the defenders. An earlier Resident, Sir Stewart Symes, trumped all aces by telling us that he had first arrived in Aden as a young officer in 1901 – in time, exactly half-way back to Captain Haines' landing.

Vivian Street brought us good news from Jordan, for which, despite our splendid life in Aden, my wife and I sometimes had strong feelings of homesickness. John and Aliki Russell, those loving connoisseurs of the Victorian-Imperial, came over from their Embassy compound in Addis-Ababa – another last bastion of the period – and we had much amusement comparing notes about our respective salutes and guards of honour; it was sad that

N. and I never got the chance of returning the visit and staying with them in their fortified Rectory on the Amharic Highlands.

From this agreeable philandering with the past I was brought back with a bump to modern reality by another old friend, now a servant of the United Nations, who accused me, with amenity, of 'standing on my rock and shaking my fist at all the world'. It is always valuable for a Colonial Governor to be kept up to date about the ideas of the U.N. Secretariat, which to him represents the other side of the hill. My friend's outburst was prompted by the knowledge that, with the strong agreement of the Federal Ministers, I had just advised the British Government not to admit into Aden a commission sent out by the Anti-Colonialism Committee in New York with the task of reporting on the future of Aden and the Protectorate. In fact, when the commission came to the Yemen, which was its nearest approach to us on its tour of the Arab world, we had our first disorders in Aden since September 1962. In the hope of giving the commission useful material, the A.T.U.C. organized a predominantly Yemeni riot in Sheikh Othman which was intended to result in British troops firing on the mob – a picturesque anti-colonialist scenario, however unlucky for the actual victims. Fortunately the police handled the trouble with such skill and patience that the troops were never even called out, and order was restored without a single casualty. But if the commission had come to Aden, we should have had more sustained and serious trouble from the local Yemenis, and it would have been difficult for us not to gratify the A.T.U.C.'s wish for photogenic disturbances – a consequence that I was determined to avoid, regardless of criticism.

As I saw it we had two possible courses in such a situation: either to carry on with our duty, and exclude bodies which, like this commission, would, if admitted, have provoked disorder; or to abdicate at once and go away like the Belgians from the Congo. Nothing in between these extremes made any sense to my mind. In particular it was fallacious to suppose that if the commission had been allowed into Aden it would have formed a view which would have been fair either to the administering power or to the

Government of the Federation. Its report, when it did appear, displayed an absolutely unshakable bias. Beyond a perfunctory mention in the introduction, it paid no heed whatever to the petition which had been submitted to the Committee in New York by Bayoomi's United National Party or to the evidence given personally before the Committee by Mohammed Farid. By way of *comble* it included testimony to the effect that British policy in South Arabia was one of 'divide and rule' – which, considering our weeks and months of sitting round the table with Federal and Aden Ministers preparing for merger, really did seem rather ungracious.

The regrettable part of all this was that the U.N. Committee and the British Government had basically the same object in view: the granting of independence to South Arabia in a way which would give it the best prospects for the future. But, as seen from Aden at least, there was an invincible refusal on the U.N. side to recognize any such intention on the part of the British; indeed a strong desire to see the failure of *any* British plan for the area, however liberal, as if on the assumption that even chaos *à la Congo* would be better than a successful and dignified hand-over of sovereignty by a Colonial power. Personally I felt, and feel, that the touchstone must be the *real* indigenous interest and not the proving of anti-Colonialist theories.

As a rule we try to keep the company at lunch-time intimate, and suitable for the exchange of ideas and jokes. We lunch in the dining-room at the far end of the house, with a dramatic view over the water and a glimpse between hills into the heart of the inner harbour, where one can see a P. and O. or an aircraft-carrier lying in the best berth.

After coffee N. and I retire upstairs to our private sitting-room for a read and a snooze. As it has the sun full on it, we still keep the air-conditioning on in here and the windows shut. The room has our own books and pictures in it and is our haven of escape.

At quarter past four the A.D.C. has arranged a game of tennis on the Government House court. Partnered by Paul Carton, the French Consul, I play against Arthur Charles, the Speaker of the

Legislative Council, and Mohammed Ghanem, the Director of Education.

In the first draft of this chapter I had included a description of the match. I then cut it out because my publishers rightly found it boring and facetious. (How difficult it is to write about sport in a way that is neither technical nor jocular!) I will only record that during the game the balls are thrown to us by two servants in white coats and red turbans, while two more in white coats and white turbans bring on jugs of fresh lime and glasses. We play for about an hour and a quarter, then sit drinking and smoking, until outside the guardroom next door the bugler blows Retreat, and the flag on top of Government House is pulled down.

After the tennis guests have gone I join N. on the terrace. The sun has just disappeared behind the pinnacles of Little Aden, which now look exactly as if cut out of cardboard. There is still enough colour to see the red of the bougainvillaea on our terrace, and the red turban of the sentry pacing between the cannon on the point. It is an extraordinarily beautiful and satisfying moment of the day. Then I go into the office and deal with the papers in my afternoon box. N. comes too and sits and writes letters at the other side of my desk while I work. Then after a quick bath and change into black tie and cummerbund, back to the office for the evening security meeting. This is often a pretty grim business, and the sense of strain to which I have referred is present with each of us round the table.

After that, dinner, which is quite a different formula from lunch. Either my wife and I retire to our private sitting-room for the absolute joy of scrambled eggs or kippers and an evening of gossip and patience; or we have a hierarchic colonial dinner party. This time it is the dinner-party: twenty people, chosen with the conscious purpose of mixing up one race with another, Aden Arabs with Federal ones, British military with British civilians. There will be no pretension to brilliancy of conversation, and the main point so far as my wife and myself are concerned is the opportunity of getting to know new people. We are both of us strongly opposed to the system by which, before and after dinner, A.D.C.s chivvy people around and wheel them up and whisk

them away again. Producing, as it does, a combined effect of pomposity and restlessness, this arrangement is guaranteed to kill stone dead the element of enjoyment, which after all is not *meant* to be taboo in Government Houses. But, having looked at the table-plan in the hall before dinner, and reminded myself who my two women neighbours at table will be, I do decide on two other people to sit between while we are having cocktails, two men to talk to at table over coffee and brandy, and two more women – preferably amusing or attractive ones – to get next to me for the longer session after we leave the dining-room.

This system may sound ridiculous and over-calculated. But for my wife and me it has the great practical advantage of allowing each of us to talk separately to eight different people during the evening. One develops a method on these occasions of getting to individual terms with people quickly; it is very much easier for us to do this in our job than it would be otherwise, since for some reason personal curiosity from 'the Gov.' and his wife is regarded as flattering and not as the impertinent bore which it would be in real life. Being myself intensely inquisitive, I am delighted to have the chance of indulging this vice without inhibition and of apparently giving pleasure in the process. But in most cases one is conscious of seeing only what one is meant to see, of not getting beyond a very limited point in the process of reserve-cracking.

Dinner is announced and we go in to the long dining-room through the windows from the terrace. The Government House servants are at last trained to stop serving me first. It took them a long time to get used to this principle, and once they had done so there was a second phase during which they never served me at all. Now the machine is properly run-in and functions admirably. On occasions like this we have champagne with the pudding – an innovation from diplomatic life which, like Mo's hair-curling dry Martinis, seems to meet with no serious resistance from Aden's official society. After the fruit, two decanters go round, one of port, and one of neat whisky. This is a sensible tradition with which I have not sought to interfere. The Aden climate is lethal to port, with the result that we use on these occasions an inferior brand of which one wishes to drink no

mouthful more than necessary. Hence the alternative of neat whisky. When the decanters get back to me, I help myself, get up, and say: 'The Queen.' We have at table with us an old, old ex-proconsul who is here on a visit. 'The King, God bless him,' he mutters as he drinks the toast. Now we can all relax and smoke and behave normally. Afterwards we sit with the ladies on the terrace. Space in all parts of the Colony is extremely short and in spite of its generous scale Government House is really at very close quarters with the Mermaid, the Forces club which is run by the N.A.A.F.I. on the beach next-door to us. Indeed, squeezed in on our point between the Mermaid and the Services Yacht Club in the bay at the other side of us, we feel at times as if the map of England had been squashed together and we were jammed in on a promontory between Brighton beach and Burnham-on-Crouch. Some evenings when we are giving a dinner we find there is a party in full swing at the Mermaid, and the strains of Mexican dance music by an amateur Forces' band are strong enough to drown all conversation. On these occasions we take action by counterblast, in the shape of a gramophone outside the big drawing-room above us with the loudest record we can find put on fortissimo: Handel's 'Royal Fireworks' – glorious, florid, triumphant eighteenth-century England. As long as this is on, not a squeak is heard out of the Mermaid. Tonight, fortunately, all is quiet, and we play something less imperious – a horn concerto of Mozart's which floats out meltingly beautiful under the tremulous Arabian stars. It is a moment of absolute magic.

Soon after eleven protocol raises its head and the guests leave in strict order of precedence. The A.D.C. sees them out, and N. and I sit down again on the terrace for a post-mortem on the party over a last whisky with our house guests. At this point the element of formality abruptly disappears. We are – as we look down over the curving rail at the dark sea and the flashing channel buoys – a group of friends gossiping in the stern of a steam yacht on a tropical voyage. There will be the same impression when we go upstairs – the long passages with metal-slatted doors suggesting cabins rather than bedrooms, and in summer the whir of the air-conditioning machinery. It is a yachtful of friends, bound for

goodness knows where. A peon in white shoes and red turban goes round turning off the lights. By midnight everyone is asleep except for the Armed Police sentries patrolling between the reflectors on the headland and round the perimeter.

CHAPTER 17

Reflections in the Northern Desert

Tours in the Protectorate made a splendid change and relaxation after the tense conditions of Aden. They were, however, themselves too full of inspections and meetings and social engagements to give much opportunity for thought. The only exception was in the Northern Desert – between the populated area of the Eastern Protectorate and Saudi Arabia – where for two days on end one could drive without meeting a soul, and thus had unique opportunities for standing back mentally and reflecting on what one was trying to do.

The desert frontier was garrisoned by a chain of forts guarding the water-holes. The forts were manned by the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion, and had been built with great economy in the early nineteen-fifties with the object of bringing peace to the desert area and preventing tribal raiding among the Bedouin. Going eastward, the line of forts ran from El Abr, an important station on the pilgrim route across the desert to Mecca, with a busy Qa'iti Customs House, through Zamakh, Minwakh, Thamūd and Sanau to Habarūt on the Muscat frontier in the far north-east corner of the Protectorate. Territorially the Northern Desert was divided between the Qa'iti, Kathiri and Mahra States. The State frontiers, depending as they did on tribal grazing rights, had always been extremely fluid. The existing disputes had been inflamed, and great new topical interest brought to the desert, by the fact that this was the area where, if anywhere, the Pan-American Company expected to find oil.

Before my wife fell ill, she and I had done a thrilling tour over

the western sector of our desert frontier, starting from the Sherifian Palace in Beihan and driving eastwards for five days through El Abr to Thamūd. With Arthur Watts and Barbara his wife, and Pat Gray, a former officer of Glubb's who now commanded the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion, we had made a congenial party.

It was like navigating a channel – the flat stretch of firm ground between the edge of the limestone *jōl* on the right and the beginning of the desert of central Arabia on the left – the mysteriously named sands of the two Shebas: Ramlat Sabatein. There had been heavy rains just before and the whole plain was covered with long pale-green grass. Now and then something on a converging course would be kicking up a wake of dust; the disturbance would come closer and resolve itself into a pair of gazelles leaping across one's bows fifty yards or so away and disappearing in the direction of the sands with a derisive bouncing of white rumps. Ahead of us the blue heat mirage increased the illusion of cruising. Patiently we hauled along the limestone cliffs, with headlands coming up and taking shape, and the mirage creating a mass of blue water ahead of us – each morning by about nine it started, and the mountains took off and began to float on a sea of heat-haze.

The eastern sector of this frontier, from Thamūd to Habarūt, still remained *terra incognita* for me. At the end of 1962, before merger, but when its success was already assured, I took time off to cover this sector with Watts and thus fill what was the major remaining gap in my first-hand knowledge of the Protectorate.

We flew to Thamūd, where the convoy was waiting for us, and the first night in camp I made the following entry in my notebook : 'Sanau. A high stony plateau ringed with dour-looking ridges in the distance. Not a bird, not a blade of grass; but great grandeur and happiness as the sun set and an almost full moon came up. I have just had my hot bath and am writing comfortably in a dressing-gown by the light of an acetylene pressure lamp in the front part of the tent. The village life of the camp goes on all round me. Next tent, Arthur Watts is drafting telegrams to go from our wireless jeep to his headquarters in Mukalla. Next tent the other way, Tony Boyle is gossiping with one of the

young political officers stationed in the Northern Desert. In the kitchen tent Mo, in his Egyptian comedian's falsetto, is producing hysterics among the grave Hadhrami servants of the Mukalla Residency, who have never met such a phenomenon in their lives before. My pipe is going; soon Mo will remember me and bring me a whisky; there are two hours until dinner, and I am perfectly contented in the masculine dream-world of a governor inspecting his frontier forts – how far from modern reality, I choose for these five days to forget.

'The merger is now seen by all to be going into effect, and has passed accordingly into the great Arabian category of the *amr waqa – fait accompli*. I have no qualms about all this. Merger may not work, but we have got to try it all the same. Personally I think it has quite a good chance of working. If it does, it will be the right thing for both lots of Arabs – Colony and Protectorate – and for our own interests as well. The people who are now least certain of its advantages, the Colony Arabs, may well turn out to be the best suited in the end by it. Anyway, we must do our damnedest to make the thing work – and that will give us a tremendously worthwhile and constructive task for the immediate future. The timetable has gone quicker than I expected and I am pleased at the prospect of the whole process going through – from the first dispatch to the Colonial Office through the long negotiations in London, Aden and London, through the rioting and intimidation and semi-emergency, through the voting in the three Assemblies, right up to the penultimate stage where we now are. It will be a splendid thing if I can see it through its first growing pains, and all within the three-year period of my tour here. The trouble is that, like a schoolboy cricket captain, I shall never have such an exciting time again. How boring to reach the climax of one's life at fifty.'

During the silence of the long days driving and the calm evenings in my tent, the merger story began to take shape in my mind.

I had been very fortunate in the backing given to me by three successive Colonial Secretaries, Messrs. Macleod, Maudling and Sandys, throughout the whole exercise, and particularly during the difficult autumn days, when Mr. Sandys' unshakable support

had been of great help and encouragement to me. The two successive Parliamentary Under-Secretaries, first my old friend Hugh Fraser, then Nigel Fisher, had been especially valuable allies and informal Counsellors; while for the Colonial Office staff under Sir Hilton Poynton no trouble had ever been too great, no request by us too exacting – and this at a time when the Office was plagued with innumerable problems arising from the simultaneous run-down of its own personnel and of the Colonial Empire.

Once the merger plan had been approved by the Aden Legislative Council, we had to be, and were, prepared for drastic action to put it through. Considering the violence of the extra-constitutional opposition to the plan in Aden, it was gratifying that such action was not in fact required. There was no bloodshed or serious rioting after 24th September, and no need at any time to resort either to a State of Emergency or to a suspension of the Constitution. This result was achieved frankly more by good luck than by good management. The vote in the Legislative Council preceded the Yemeni Revolution by a few hours. If the result had been the other way round, if the Revolution had beaten the vote, not only would the vote have almost certainly gone the wrong way, but also the whole operation would have taken on a defensive aspect; it would have looked like an attempted reply to events in the Yemen, rather than the striking local initiative which in fact it was. The whole status of the plan would have been down-graded and it would have had little chance of ever being put into effect. In this situation, neither a State of Emergency nor a suspension of the Constitution would have been of any help. Among the international journalists in the St. George's bar in Beirut, the betting in the autumn had, I was told, been four to one against the merger coming off. How nearly right this judgement was!

Recognition of the Yemeni Republic by the British Government before the completion of the merger process would have had a deeply unsettling effect in Aden and in the Federation. In both places it would have been interpreted as a humiliating retreat by the British Government and as a sign that our influence in South Arabia was on the wane. The large Yemeni community in

Aden, already bitterly opposed to merger, might well have become difficult to control. In the Federation such action would have been interpreted not only by rulers and Ministers, but by the tribes and the men of the Federal Armed Forces, as a signal that they must reinsure with the Republic. In both places it would have focused all eyes on the Greater South Arabia idea, represented by the Yemen's claim to Aden and the Protectorate as now revived in inflammatory form by the public utterances of Republican leaders, and away from the Little South Arabia concept of our own merger plan. From the Aden point of view, it was fortunate that the British Government's criteria in these matters did not impel them to recognize the Republic during this crucial period.

Trying to look farther ahead, it seemed to me personally, as we scooted along in the dry, dispassionate desert air, that the Greater South Arabia concept of union with the Yemen was likely to be realized some day. South Arabia is, in fact, one part of the Arab world where the general urge towards closer unity has good prospects of being put into effect in the course of time. In present circumstances, however, the realization of such a plan would obviously mean the end of the Aden base, and would therefore be quite unacceptable to us. Did this imply that we were, for selfish imperial reasons, blocking a solution which would really be in the interests of the peoples for whom we were responsible in Aden and the Protectorate? To my mind, the answer to this was certainly no. The Yemen was so backward that for some time to come it would be nothing but a burden to any neighbour who joined it. It would be difficult enough anyway to get our present merger to 'take'; it was like bringing modern Glasgow into a union with the eighteenth-century Highlands of Scotland. To add the Yemen as well would mean – so far at least as many of its tribes were concerned – going even farther back in time and introducing a whole lot of Picts covered in woad. Quite apart from the resulting loss of the British base, the economic effect on Aden would be catastrophic. From its present proud status as a great international communications centre and as the biggest bunkering port in the world, it would be brought down to the level of a sleepy provincial harbour in an underdeveloped

In Mukalla the Sultanic family brought with them an atmosphere reminiscent of princely India. Left to right, H.H. The Quaiti Sultan; his younger son; Jehan Khan, State Minister

A descent of 3,500 feet in six miles over the new Thira Pass

In the Northern Desert: Arthur Watts and a tribal leader at Minwakh

Domestic interior at Government House: the author and his wife

country, a sort of poor man's Hodeida. All the prosperity built up since the British occupation of Aden in 1839 would be lost, and the present easygoing international co-operation would be replaced by Arab nationalism in its narrowest form. To contemplate such an idea would be to betray the interests, not only of Britain, but of the inhabitants of Aden and the Protectorate. There could be no doubt at all that, of the two possible plans for South Arabia, our own less ambitious one was right, namely the merger of Aden with the Federation. This plan not only provided the best prospects of safeguarding British interests in the area for some years to come; from the point of view of the inhabitants its great advantage was that it represented a practical approach-step towards South Arabian unity, an immediately feasible first move which in no way precluded a further one later on, namely some form of association with the Yemen, when that could be achieved without destroying the stability and prosperity built up by the British during their connection with South Arabia.

There was, I knew well, a rival view, strongly held by my friend Harold Ingrams (and since expounded in his book *The Yemen*[1]), to the effect that the whole Federal concept was a mistake and that we British would have done much better to take no hand in these matters at all, but to follow Lawrence's precept: 'Arabia must be left to fight out its own fatal and complex destiny.' I had the greatest respect for Ingrams' achievement in bringing peace to the Eastern Protectorate. Frankly, however, I never could follow him in his view that the Englishman in Arabia must try to think as an Arab. It is, I believe, an impossible undertaking, and those who have attempted it usually end up in an esoteric faith based on the incomprehensibility of Arabia and the inherent hopelessness of any Western attempt to influence its development. I do not except Lawrence from this criticism, indeed I think the quotation from him above, with its hollow boom about Arabia's 'fatal and complex destiny', typifies the attitude which I am trying to describe – half rational, half mystical, and wholly oracular.

My own view, held modestly but with conviction, was and is that all this is much too pessimistic. In the modern world no race

[1] John Murray, 1963

can afford to be unhelpable. Whether we like it or not, we are all inextricably mixed up together. No people can stand aside, wrapped in the mantle of its own peculiarity, and let the main course of events pass it by. Least of all the Arabs, who with all their mysticism and all their emotionalism, also have a quite different element, which is omitted in the romantic picture of them drawn for us by Lawrence: an ancient and strongly mercantile streak, and a remarkably sharp eye for their own interests. They are tremendous individualists, agreed. But they are also capable of combining when convinced that it is to their advantage to do so. When Lawrence said: 'Anybody who talks of Arab Federation talks fantastically,' he was absolutely right, for the present at least, in respect of Federation on the international scale – between already existing nations – as the failure of several recent attempts to achieve it has fully proved. But he would be wrong if he meant that Federation on the more modest *national* scale is impossible, or, in other words, that Arabia is condemned to remain in a tribal condition of society and that no attempt to amalgamate tribes into Sultanates, or Sultanates into Federal States, can ever succeed.

In fact there are two separate issues here. Ingrams believes that Western-style democracy can never suit the Arabs, and that the only form of government which can work with them is authoritarian rule by a strong leader. Reluctantly I am unable to contradict him on this. I do think, however, that, as long as we British have formal responsibility in any part of Arabia, it is impossible for us to do anything but try to promote there the institutions in which we ourselves believe – parliamentary government, trades unions, etc. In preparing an area for independence, it is our duty at least to see that the sights are on *our* target before we pull the trigger. If, after leaving the muzzle, the bullet gets deflected and hits quite a different target instead, that, alas, is something that we can no longer control.

In this case we had no alternative but to use our influence to bring the Federal structure as close to representative government as possible, and to insist that Aden should enter the Federation with all its British-made democratic institutions intact. What

happens to all this after we go is not our look-out. At least we have done our duty as we see it.

The other and more critical point at issue is this. Basically Ingrams does not believe in the possibility of bringing together the tribes of the Western Protectorate – still less the townspeople of Aden as well – into any form of unitary state on the Western model. There is no point in arguing this issue at length. In the last resort it is very much a question of hunch. But certainly there is no historical evidence to suggest that attempts to form Western-style states in Arabia are *bound* to fail; or that British assistance in such a process is necessarily fatal. On the contrary King Abdulla tackled the difficult task of forming the discordant tribesmen and townsmen of Transjordan into a single political entity and, with Glubb Pasha's help, made a success of it. Iraq and Libya are other unitary states which have come into being with British assistance. There have been political vicissitudes in all these countries. All attempts so far to federate them with other Arab countries have failed. But no one has suggested that they are bound to split up again into their component tribes and villages, as on Ingrams' 'atomistic' theory of Arab political life they presumably should.

The truth is that we not only can, but ought to, help the peoples of South Arabia to unite. Independence is coming to them anyway. The alternative of letting them achieve it in penny packets, split up according to the flukes of tribal grazing or the caprices of British administrative convenience, seems to me irresponsible to the point of idiocy. Ingrams claims that our unification policy is prejudicing the wider unity of what I have called Greater South Arabia and of what he calls 'al Yemen' in the comprehensive sense. I am sure that, on the contrary, such unity will never be realized in any true form without preliminary steps towards it in the shape of regional or partial unities in the area. The Zeidi Imams of the Yemen built up one such partial unity based on San'a, yet nobody accused them of separatism or of wrecking a wider conception. The partial unity now being constructed in the Federation of South Arabia has a much firmer basis in the consent of the governed. It is true that the British have taken a

hand in its opening stages, but I am bold enough to think that it is none the worse for that. It is at least as promising an approach shot towards Greater South Arabian unity as was the tyrannical and violently sectarian régime of the Imam Ahmed. That régime has now collapsed, and the attempt to replace it by a nationalistic, Pan-Arab, Republican type of unity seems at any rate to be making remarkably little headway at present.

The other theoretically possible policy, namely for the British to do nothing, sit tight, and turn Aden into a Hong Kong or a Rock of Gibraltar, though sometimes suggested in the right-wing British press, had never been a starter at all. For some years the British Government had been clearly committed to further constitutional advance in Aden. Such constitutional advance could most safely be carried out in the Federal framework. If effected in isolation, it would have started Aden off on the path of a separate development most dangerous to itself, to the Federation and to the British base. The consequences could have been disastrous. At a very early date we might well have had to choose between giving up the Aden base or maintaining it by force – a process which, according to our past experience, we have never been able to sustain for very long. The withdrawal of the British base would have meant either the forcible overrunning of Aden by the Federal authorities, or the collapse of the Federation and the realization of the Greater South Arabia idea at the wrong time and in the wrong way. In either event, we should have lost our base and left a sort of minor Congo behind us.[1]

[1] A variant of the 'Hong Kong' theory seems to be implied in Miss Elizabeth Monroe's survey: *Britain's Moment in the Middle East* (Chatto and Windus, 1963). Miss Monroe comments on the merger as follows: 'At Aden in 1963 [the British] committed themselves more deeply than before to involvement in the affairs of Arabia, for they induced the citizens of Aden Colony to join an Arab Federation that is being groomed for ultimate independence, yet in the same agreement they retained their own sovereignty in Aden. They thus linked the labour force on which their Aden base must rely to an Arab group that is bound to develop familiar symptoms; experience in all other dependencies shows that dependent peoples grow more nationalist as Independence Day approaches. The British furnished the people of

Another thought which made a great impression on me was this. It was true that merger could not have been achieved without our leadership, but no amount of British initiatives could have brought it off if it had not also accorded with the largely unspoken and inarticulate desire of the people of South Arabia for greater unity within the limitations of the possible.

In any case there was no reason for complacent self-congratulation. Merger, when realized as it would be in a month's time, would be very far from the end of the story. In accordance with the agreement reached in London, the life of the Aden Legislative Council had been prolonged for a year, until January 1964. It would be up to the Aden Council of Ministers to introduce a new franchise before that date. Elections were bound to come as soon as that had been effected, and the uncertainty about their outcome must put a question mark over the future of Aden and its relationship with the Federation. This was now our main impending problem.

Two days out from Thamūd, in camp at Wadi Shihan, I wrote in my notebook: 'We stopped for lunch today among the dunes on the edge of the Empty Quarter. All morning, bowling over gravel plains or bumping across fields of dead grass, we had seen the pink coastline of sand along the horizon to the left of us. Closer to, we could make out purplish mountains with a sort of blurred rhythm about them, as if there were hard shapes stacked below like furniture under dustcovers. The forms had a fluid,

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Aden with a loophole through which to quit the South Arabian Federation but none through which to leave the British fold, yet they linked them to a group that might, if Central Arabia or Yemen were to outgrow its age of despotism, one day wish to add itself to some larger Arab Federation.'

The implication here seems to be that we have brought an Aden that was quite happy as it was into union with an independence-minded Federation, and have therefore hastened the end of our own sovereignty over Aden itself. As this account has tried to show, the truth is quite otherwise. Before the merger process began, the people of Aden were if anything even more independence-minded than those of the old Federation. The choice was between independence for Aden and the Federation separately, or independence for them together. This, I believe, is not a choice about which any impartial observer would hesitate for a moment.

dream-like symmetry; it was the architecture of Gaudi applied to sand. To the side and rather ahead of us the guide landrover ploughed up a gunpowderish trail of dust that smoked away from its wheels into a jumping, tumbling sternwave. Landrovers running along with their hoods up have a knowing, informal look, like little men with their hands in their pockets and their hats on the back of their heads. Our convoy of nodding dwarfs wound over rough going between the first purple outcrops and came to a halt in a valley just inside the dunes. In no time the awning was up between the first two vehicles, folding chairs were grouped round a rough table, and Mo was taking orders for gin and tonic. The wireless vehicle was chirruping away and soon word drifted across that a code telegram from the Chief Secretary in Aden was coming through. We talked approvingly of the luxury of cold drinks in among the dunes, and this led on to a discussion of the *mores* of the Englishman in Arabia. Arthur is very strict about not letting his young political officers spend too long in the Northern Desert and about checking their tendency to go Bedouin and live on the floor. The outgoing one was pulling the leg of his successor for going too far in the opposite direction. ("With his china and his candlesticks, I feel I don't need to go on leave – the Café Royal's been brought to me here.") I told how the two extremes had been happily combined in one English family we knew in Jordan. A young Bedouinising member of my staff, right in the Glubb tradition, had married a tremendously Knightsbridge girl, who revolutionized his bachelor shooting hut in the marshes, and hung up striped curtains with pelmets in the windows, and when one came in from snipe-shooting, up to the neck in stinking bog, would call out: "Now, *who'd* like a Dry Martini and *who'd* like a game of canasta?"

'After lunch, Tony Boyle came round the back of the landrover with his bad-news face on, and handed me a signal. "My immediately following telegram should be passed by the fastest route to the Governor. It will entail his return to Aden. Aircraft will be in position Habarūt 0900 hours tomorrow." '

I suppress the last paragraph of this entry in the interests of good taste. Its general sense was one of irritation at having no

time to visit Habarūt fort and no chance to take a crack at the sand-grouse coming in to the well there. It meant the end of our free life in the desert. Back to files, and Ministers, and Cabinet-making, and all the *keeni-meeni*[1] of Aden and Al Ittihad. I forget now the reason for which I was so suddenly recalled. Whatever the storm was, it soon blew over. But I record the incident all the same as it was typical of any extended tour in the Protectorate that one should be summoned back to Aden before it was completed.

[1] A useful piece of basic South Arabian Arabic, this expression means roughly 'jiggery-pokery'.

CHAPTER 18

The last six months

Merger day for me was a mixture of triumph and personal sadness. The night before it, my wife was flown home to London again for hospital treatment, this time in a seriously ill condition.

Since she returned to Aden with me in August the year before, her health had made good progress. Her presence through all the difficult autumn time had been a godsend to me. By the New Year she was looking sunburnt, and more like her old self. Early in January I was called home for consultations. The morning of my departure N. was ready dressed at six o'clock and drove with me to the airport. While I was in London she was taken ill with jaundice, and the next time I saw her she was in the R.A.F. hospital on Barrack Hill, yellower than could be believed, as if she had been turned into a painted devil in a nightmare. After she had reached hospital in London, a specialist's examination showed that an operation was advisable to remove the gallbladder. I was summoned back to London again and visited her in hospital the night before the operation. I had been frightened enough by her condition last time I saw her in Aden. This time she scared me in a different way, and even more. Hardly yellow at all, clear-eyed, soft-haired, beautiful; resigned, confessed, communicated, serene, practically an angel already. I much preferred her as a devil.

Thank God, the operation went off all right, and N. started to make a normal recovery. When I had to leave London and return to Aden she was not yet entirely out of danger, and at best there was all the cruel, wicked, cat-and-mouse business of another long convalescence to face. But at least there was a strong will to live, and the doctors' reports were guardedly encouraging.

I will not try to narrate my last six months in Aden in any

detail. It is all too recent in my memory. The main story as far as I was concerned had finished with merger, but there were three major developments since that date which must now be related.

In the Yemen the Royalist insurrection against the Republic had led to a stalemate condition of civil war in which the Zeidi tribesmen of the north-east were arrayed against a large Egyptian expeditionary force based on the principal towns. It was clear that the Republic had not in any substantial manner increased the territory under its control. In these circumstances the British Government did not consider that their criteria for recognizing it as the rightful government of the Yemen had been satisfied. Christopher Gandy, who had replaced Ronald Bailey as our Chargé d'Affaires, was battling gallantly with the problems which beset him in Taiz. It was a sad end to his efforts when the Republican authorities, who had long been pressing for British recognition, finally decided that, as it was not forthcoming, Gandy's Mission must withdraw from the Yemen.

Our feeling in Aden was that the only way in which this tragic civil war could be ended would be by Yemeni leaders of both sides coming together and settling the fate of their country among themselves. It was not a situation where any long-term solution should or could be imposed from outside. The interests of Aden and the Federation demanded the setting up of a stable and friendly Government in the Yemen as soon as possible. Only then would we be able to negotiate a settlement of our nagging frontier problems; and only then would trade in the whole area be able to flourish as it ought.

At this time, seen in the wider setting of world power-politics, Aden was an isolated Western strongpoint falling geographically between all the three collective stools – NATO, CENTO and SEATO. In fact its strategic value was clearly a joint Western one and not a British one only. There was, however, an obvious danger that, besides bearing the financial cost of the Aden base, Britain would also find itself alone in carrying the political burden – in the sense of providing our Allies with facilities and getting criticism in return rather than support. Fortunately in this case realism seemed to have triumphed over anti-colonial prejudice; anyhow, the U.S. Government now left it in no doubt that they

regarded the security of the Aden base as a matter of joint Anglo-American concern. From the standpoint of the general Western interest in the area, this was an important step forward. At a time when there was a conspicuous divergence of policy between the two Governments about the Yemen – Washington granting recognition to the Republicans while London continued to withhold it – it was satisfactory that the basic consciousness of shared advantages in Aden should have been firmly acknowledged.

We were indeed much indebted to the American Legation in the Yemen, who took charge of British interests there after Gandy's withdrawal, for the conscientious way in which they carried out this task. It cannot have been at all an easy one, for example in February 1963 when we had to take military action in the Wadi Ablah section of the Beihan frontier to expel a Yemeni Republican force which had been sitting inside Protectorate territory for some weeks and had refused to move in spite of repeated warnings. Fortunately this intervention was sharp enough to succeed immediately in its object, and the episode was very soon forgotten. Nevertheless, there was a serious increase in frontier tension early in March when, following the capture of Mārib by Egyptian forces, the town of Harīb, a few hundred yards from the Beihan frontier, fell into the hands of the Republicans.

As a general policy about frontier incidents I found it best to do nothing at all unless we were absolutely sure of our ground; and, even then, to show an apparently inexhaustible patience before acting. The result of these procedures was always the same. The Federal Ministers complained loudly about weakness and implied that we were failing in our duty of protecting the Protectorate. It was essential not to be moved in the slightest by such criticism. Once satisfied that our legal case, and our record over the handling of it, were both unanswerably strong – on two or three occasions during my tour – I sought London's approval for counter-measures, always on the basis that they must be in such overwhelming force as to produce an instantaneous effect and spare us the tension of a long-drawn-out incident. After such action had been taken, we were immediately exposed to criticism from people who thought that it had been excessive. All this of

course was the routine bread and butter of the Governor's job. But while diplomatic notes were quite useless on such occasions, it was certainly a help, both before and after military action by us, to have even such a roundabout link with the Yemeni Republic as the American Legation in Taiz provided.

Another occasion when this connection proved of value was the tragic and much-publicized episode of the 'adventure training' party from Middle East Command Headquarters, which mistakenly crossed the Yemeni frontier at night and, after losing four men killed in a skirmish with tribesmen, was arrested and detained by the local Yemeni authorities. We very much hoped to get the party, which included four women, set free at the frontier post where it was held. John Wheelock, the American Consul in Aden, gave us valuable help in sending his Arabic-speaking assistant, John Tinney, to negotiate with the Yemeni frontier officials to this effect. Unfortunately instructions from Taiz were categoric that the prisoners must be removed there, and it required several days more, and the intervention of the American Chargé d'Affaires with the Republican leaders, before the unhappy survivors could be released.

Hassan Bayoomi's attitude towards his health was exactly the same as towards threats of physical violence: complete indifference. During the autumn the whole resources of Pan-Arab propaganda were turned on to the task of frustrating the merger policy by intimidating its Adenese supporters. Aden's eighty thousand Yemenis were incited to violence by inflammatory broadcasts from San'a. As leader of the Federalist party Bayoomi was inundated with threats against his life. He refused to budge an inch. His fortitude had a rocklike quality rare among political leaders in Arabia, or indeed anywhere else. During the critical days of September, just before the Legislative Council was to vote on the merger plan, a group of Arab police officers were overheard discussing the situation among themselves. 'Of course, Bayoomi will be murdered before the week is out,' said one of them in the flat tones of somebody stating a truism. This got back to Bayoomi, who relayed it to me in a mood of humorous

complaint: everyone in Aden believed the remark to be true, certainly; but it did seem rather a pity that the police, of all people, should be accepting it in such a spirit of detachment.

After merger, as the only member of both the Federal and the Aden State Governments, Hassan carried an enormously heavy responsibility for making the complex new machinery work. Here his flexibility and finesse came into their own, and for a short period we were introduced to a new character: Bayoomi the diplomat, the sedulous and effective oiler of wheels.

He also remained a fighter, however, and not for the first time his growl was directed against myself. I had impressed on all my English staff that the constitutional advance of January 1963 was a real one and that we must break ourselves of any tendency to go on trying to run the place as if we were still Governor and Chief Secretary and Secretariat. Soon afterwards, through thoughtlessness and other preoccupations, I offended against this principle myself in one particular respect. I became conscious of the situation, and decided on measures to put it right. Before I had time to act, however, I received a visit from Bayoomi and the whole Council of Ministers – very calm, very polite, but with an undertone of formality and of tension which was unusual in my relations with them. Bayoomi alluded courteously to the point at issue and explained that in the circumstances he and his colleagues had no alternative but to submit their resignations; they would, however, and he emphasized this as if it were the most important part of the communication, continue at their posts until I had appointed new Ministers to replace them. The others backed him up, speaking in the same tone. I thanked them for their frankness, and said I would let the Chief Minister know my decision. Two days later I asked Bayoomi to call, conceded the point at issue with good grace, then asked him if, next time, he would kindly take any such matters up with me privately first, in our customary way, rather than come up with all his fellow-Ministers to put a pistol at my head. Bayoomi cheerfully agreed; he had achieved what he immediately wanted, a striking victory over the English in front of his colleagues so as to increase his prestige and standing with them. Personally I had no objection

to his building himself up now and then at our expense. Our shoulders were broad enough to stand it. The episode blew over happily enough and nothing more was heard about resignations. The speed with which Bayoomi had seized the opportunity for a showdown with me before I could get myself out of my false position left me amused, irritated and admiring.

This incident took place about the end of March. I sensed at the time that the emotional strain of it had told on Bayoomi. He was a heavy man for his height, a chain-smoker, and a consistent overworker. He was also a diabetic who had always refused proper treatment. At the end of December, just before the merger, I had insisted on his taking ten days' holiday, which he spent in Switzerland and in Beirut. He came back rested, but since then pressures of all sorts had come crowding in again. Early on 7th April he was taken to hospital with coronary thrombosis. The medical view was that, if he survived at all, he would need a minimum of six months' complete rest.

It thus became necessary to appoint the best possible acting Chief Minister to carry on the government of Aden until Bayoomi's future became clearer.

In this situation I knew Hassan's choice and agreed with it. Sayid Zein Baharoon was a recent arrival on the political scene. At thirty-two he was already one of Aden's leading merchants and most respected citizens. As such he had topped the poll in December when the members of the Legislative Council elected four new members to replace the outgoing English officials. When Bayoomi formed his Cabinet in January, Baharoon was the obvious choice for the Ministry of Finance. Since then he had quietly come to assume the leading position among Bayoomi's colleagues.

Unlike Bayoomi, Baharoon was a man of well-known family and some private means. As a Sayid he enjoyed the customary social and religious prestige. As an active international trader he understood the habits of foreign capital and the importance of not frightening it away from Aden. He was susceptible to the currents of Pan-Arab nationalism; but was perhaps, at the same time, more sensitive than Bayoomi to the international basis of Aden's mercantile prosperity. His attitude to the Aden T.U.C.

and to the nationalist opposition generally was more open-minded than Bayoomi's, and his personal relationships with opposition leaders were not bedevilled, as Bayoomi's had been, by the embittered, ingrowing family vendettas of middle-class Crater.

Physically Zein Baharoon made an impression older than his years. A massive, thick-set man, with a quiet elegance of dress, he looked searchingly at the world from behind thick lenses, which increased still further a natural look of impenetrability. He had a slow, calm, deliberate way of talking which accurately reflected his temperament. I was impressed by the unobtrusive authority with which during the period of Bayoomi's illness he asserted his leadership over a group of Ministers older and mostly more experienced in politics than himself.

After some weeks in hospital in Aden, Bayoomi was judged sufficiently recovered to go to England by sea for specialist treatment there. He stood the journey well, and insisted on trying to lead a normal life in London. One day in June he was suddenly taken ill again, was removed to hospital, and died there on 24th June.

Thus at one blow Aden was deprived of its Chief Minister, and the new, enlarged Federation of one of its main architects. To my mind Bayoomi will always stand out among the political leaders of the Arab world. Both in appearance and in character there was something leonine about him. Speaking on the radio immediately after his death, I felt that his stature entitled me to call him 'The Lion of the South'. It was a particularly unkind stroke that carried him off just as he had reached a position commensurate with his abilities. On his death it became my responsibility to appoint a substantive Chief Minister in his place. Consultation with leading members of the Legislative Council revealed to me an overwhelming degree of support for Baharoon – unanimous among his fellow-members of the Aden Cabinet, and widespread even among the opposition. The Federal Ministers favoured him and so did politicians in close touch with the Aden T.U.C. It was clear that local opinion, with one of those sudden movements of mass sentiment which occur from time to time in Arabia – and indeed elsewhere – had crystallized almost overnight round the conception of Baharoon as a middle-of-the-road figure,

well suited for the new chapter in Aden's political evolution which was now beginning. Bayoomi, the man of storm and strain, had been the right leader for the violent stresses of Aden's entry into the Federation. That had now been accomplished; on the basis of it, there was a widespread yearning for tensions to be eased and reconciliations effected in the industrial and political worlds; and Baharoon was generally regarded as the leader most suited by outlook and temperament to meet the requirements of the new situation.

I asked Baharoon to accept the charge and, after a hesitation which did his modesty credit, he agreed to do so. He kept all the previous Ministers in his Government, but in addition brought in two new ones, Basendwa and Ali Salem, both men of previous ministerial experience, and both of a reputation to fit in with the general picture of a middle course and a policy of reconciliation.

At the same time the Aden T.U.C. for their part were temporarily at least in a depressed condition. The sorry plight of the Yemeni Republic was now generally recognized in Aden, and the T.U.C. leaders began to regret that they had committed themselves so far to a policy of uniting Aden with the Yemen. Pan-Arab nationalism remained a powerful force, but the people of Aden were also conscious of their material interests, and had no wish to be pulled down to the primitive economic level of the distraught Yemeni Republic.

Meanwhile, rival Nasserite and Ba'athist tendencies, similar to those which were arrayed against each other on the wider Arab stage, began to split the leadership of the Aden T.U.C. Asnag himself, loyal as always to the Egyptian President, was on a prolonged absence from Aden. Rumour asserted that he was beginning to think the Aden stage was too small for his abilities and was wishing to play a part in the wider world of the Cairo-based Confederation of Arab Trades Unions, of which he was already Assistant General Secretary.

As one of his first actions, Baharoon made a determined effort to persuade the Trades Union leadership to accept representation on an industrial Joint Advisory Council together with representatives of the employers and of the Government. This had been

a cherished plan of ours for some time, but so far the A.T.U.C. had not been prepared to co-operate in it. In the new, relaxed atmosphere there was some reason to hope that they might be persuaded to overcome their scruples. If so, this would be the first step towards the abolition of the 1960 Ordinance and the inauguration of a period of industrial peace.

Meanwhile, no solution had been found to the problem of the next elections in Aden and the date and basis on which they should be held. The existing franchise was unpopular with all political parties. The Government's supporters and the moderate opposition both disliked it because it allowed the vote to Indian residents in a manner which Arab nationalists of every shade regarded as too unrestricted. The A.T.U.C. disliked it not only for this reason, but also because it denied the vote to Yemenis in Aden – Yemeni labour being the backbone of the A.T.U.C.'s support. One thing was clear beyond all doubt – an election now, on this franchise, would satisfy nobody. Shortly before Bayoomi fell ill he had, with typical astuteness, proposed an immediate election to the Legislative Council, and the idea had been rejected without a dissentient voice.

In these circumstances Bayoomi had been trying to set up a Commission of Inquiry which should investigate and report on the amendments necessary in the franchise. He had rightly been anxious to get all sections of Adenese opinion represented on this Commission, but his efforts to that effect had not yet borne fruit when he fell ill. Baharoon took the task over from him and one of the first successes of his régime as Chief Minister was the announcement that a widely representative Commission of Inquiry had been set up.

The other major development during the period between merger and my departure concerned the relationship between the new, enlarged Federation and the two Hadhrami States.

The position here had been for some time that, while the Kathiri Sultan would have liked to join the Federation, the Qa'iti authorities were working for a separate Federation consisting of the two Hadhrami States only. On my final visit to the Eastern

Protectorate, however, I found that an important change had taken place in Mukalla. The Sultan's Council indicated then that, provided certain differences which the Qa'iti had with the Kathiri over frontiers and the distribution of oil revenues could be settled, there would probably be no objections from the Qa'iti side to both Hadhrami States entering the enlarged Federation.

This was to my mind a most encouraging development. Although the Hadhrami States were in much less close relationship with either Aden or the Western Protectorate than those two entities were with each other, nevertheless there were a number of good reasons why they should join the Federation. First, it was more than possible that the Pan-American Oil Company would discover oil in their area. Under the existing Federal Constitution, oil revenues were a State and not a Federal asset. The Federation would gain no direct benefit from the accession to it of States with oil revenues of their own. Nevertheless, the prosperity resulting from oil would obviously spread by indirect means across the whole Federation once the oil-owning States had acceded to it. In turn, those States would gain by joining a larger and stronger entity. Otherwise, when independence came for the area, as it was bound to do one day, the Hadhrami States would find themselves small and isolated, with their oil wealth, if they had it, making them all the more attractive to greedy neighbours. Secondly, opinion throughout the Arab world is predisposed in favour of unity, and although our own efforts to assist that cause in South Arabia had met with violent nationalist criticism, we were in fact doing no more than our plain duty. It was now for us to persevere in this path and do everything we could to create one entity out of Aden and the Protectorates instead of allowing the area to reach independence in small parcels. Thirdly, the interest of the peoples of both Protectorates pointed strongly towards the merger. Economically, politically and tribally speaking, it would be absurd to separate the two. Hadhrami merchants were an important element in Aden. Baharoon himself was of Hadhrami origin; so were Basendwa and two more of Aden's representatives in the Federal Council; so were several senior Federal officials. Fourthly, the accession of the Hadhrami

States would be warmly welcomed in the Federation, and particularly in Aden. Despite the distance and the lack of communications, Aden had in many ways greater affinities with the sophisticated urban societies of Mukalla and the Hadhramaut than with the tribal world of the Western Protectorate. The inclusion of the Hadhramis in the Federation thus presented special attractions from the point of view of Aden.

At the same time I had to recognize that there were major practical difficulties about bringing the Hadhrami States in. The Qa'iti Customs revenue, totalling more than half a million pounds a year, raised a special problem. Obviously the accession of the Qa'iti to the Federation would make no sense unless the high Qa'iti tariff was replaced by the much lower Federal one. But how then could the Customs revenues, which were the mainstay of the Qa'iti State administration, be replaced? The question was difficult; but so were the problems which had obstructed the accession of Aden to the Federation and which had nevertheless been surmounted once we had addressed our minds to them.

In many ways I would have liked to remain in Aden for the second merger exercise which thus now seemed to be looming up, and which would to all practical purposes complete the unification of our area of responsibility in South Arabia.

But it was not to be. My wife's doctor ruled firmly that although she had nearly recovered from her second illness she should not return to Aden. 'Only a fool makes the same mistake twice,' he said, unanswerably. I therefore indicated to the Colonial Office with some delicacy that I should not like to be asked to prolong my tour and that, on the contrary, in order to shorten my separation from my wife during her convalescent stage, I should be grateful if I could end it two months early, in August 1963 instead of October. This meant that in fact I should be leaving Aden in July and taking some leave that was due to me before finally giving up the appointment in August. My request was considerately approved.

The obvious choice to succeed me, on grounds of rank and of every qualification, was Ken Trevaskis, my senior deputy. He was duly appointed and it was arranged that he should take over as High Commissioner in August.

PART TWO

CHAPTER 19

Ceremony and power

There will not be so many more Colonial Governors – not from our type of civilization, anyway. So it may be worth trying to set down, almost as a matter of historical curiosity, what it feels like to be one, while I still have the experience freshly in mind.

I myself came into this business from the outside, never having dreamt that such a job would fall to me, and never having previously worked under Colonial Governors or observed how they behaved. So I had an outsider's-eye view, which is certainly more superficial than the professional's-eye view, but may also have the sharpness of naïveté. I write in terms of a British Colony, though I suspect that some at least of my observations would apply in the Colonial territories of other powers.

First of all there is the representational side, the pomp and circumstance and parading and saluting. A certain amount of ceremony is an inseparable part of the job – not, I believe, so much to impress the inhabitants as for the benefit of the local British. In the present age the indigenous peoples of the remaining Colonial territories know that Colonial régimes are on the way out anyway, and a few salutes and feathers and medals more or less will not have much effect on them one way or the other. It is the local British – conscious of the same truth about the forthcoming end of Colonial régimes – who need a treatment of heart-stirring and symbol-waving to carry them through the disquieting last period of Empire. For them the Governor is the totem-pole. He symbolizes the importance of their own efforts; the individual status of each of them is determined by their relationship to him; any cutting down of gubernatorial pomp is a

blow to the position of them all. It is the British and not the Orientals who care most about these things, and for whom they must be maintained.

In general it has long seemed to me that as a race we ourselves possess most the characteristics which we ascribe to the peoples of the East. Indeed the best short summing-up of the Arabs which I know is that they are exactly like the British, only not so tricky. (This is a theme which I should like to develop further in some more suitable context. It does not belong logically either in the present chapter or indeed in the present book.)

In spite of the admitted requirement, too much pomp is, I am sure, a great mistake. It stamps the régime with an illiberal and uncontemporary appearance – *pessimi exempli nec nostri saeculi.* It irritates the indigenous, if not spontaneously, then with the help of anti-Colonialist visitors, British and others, from outside, who come in and tell them they *ought* to be irritated. It is interpreted, however wrongly, as an attempt to rub in the circumstances of power, and gloat over the differences between ruler and ruled. It can do serious political harm by offending the dignity of Colonial peoples.

With the object of striking a balance between these opposing considerations I cut down on ceremonial to begin with, then left things as they were for the rest of my term of office. The impression I aimed at giving was that of a man who disliked pomp but felt a certain minimum of it was politically necessary. This is certainly the most convenient *persona* for a present-day Governor, whatever his real feelings may be. It establishes an easygoing atmosphere in his private relationships, which is of the utmost practical value in dealing with the leading British and indigenous personalities. It means that other people assume the duty of protecting the Governor's dignity, and he is spared the devastating boredom and embarrassment of having to do this for himself. It sets a relaxed tone in the touchy protocolaire world of Colonial society and tends to make for a smoother relationship between the other British authorities in the area. Nothing is worse than having ambassadors, service commanders and business chiefs *à cheval* on matters of dignity and punctilio. I found it helpful to

make it clear from the start that I regarded protocol as necessary in small doses but as basically something ridiculous.

In particular I took against the Governor being expected to go in to dinner first, sit down first, and be served first, whether in Government House or in the houses of other people. I was sure that the time for such rites was now past, if it ever existed. I abolished them soon after my arrival in Aden and damned the criticism. I recognized, of course, that such action was inherently easier in Aden than in other territories. All I had to do was to plead local custom. No Sultan in the Protectorates, however authoritarian, would ever dream of going in, or sitting down, or being served, before his guests; on the contrary, he may not even sit down at all, but hover around like a maître d'hotel making sure that everyone has enough to eat; yet by such behaviour his authority, so far from suffering, is reinforced with universal approval.

If those are the customs of the peoples of South Arabia, why should we think it bolsters our prestige to outrage the local conception of good manners and behave instead like some common, oilrich parvenu? Such at least was my train of argument. Frankly, if that one had not worked, I should have found something else equally convincing. Normally I like arguing a thing out first and then deciding, but there are times when decision comes first and argument comes afterwards, and that is all there is to it.

Secondly, there is power. In most countries of the democratic Western world the externals and the reality of power have long since been divided from each other, and allotted to different hands; distributed between what Bagehot called the dignified and the efficient elements in the constitution. On its miniature scale, a Colony is a survival from an earlier phase of Western political development. It preserves under a glass dome the situation as it was in the home country before the shadow of power was divorced from the substance. A Governor is, in an utterly minute way, a monarch who must both reign and rule. So far as reigning goes, he is the Sovereign's representative and has to do his poor best to carry out this rôle. As to ruling, the Governor's authority is subordinated, certainly, to that of the British Government and ultimately of Parliament; but in practice this leaves

him a very considerable latitude for local decision. It is not a question of his arrogating London's authority to himself. Over a very wide field, London leaves the initiative to him, and he must take it if he wants to avoid an administrative vacuum, always so fatal to the interests of both ruler and ruled.

Before going to Aden I had never had power in any real sense. I do not expect ever to have it again. Various categories of people in London are supposed to have power – business heads, newspaper owners, top civil servants and the like. From my experience I should guess that such power as these leaders have is normally illusory, except in one direction only: over their own staffs. This is a pretty basic minimum; no chief at all can be effective unless he controls his subordinates. Power going beyond that degree, however, is rare indeed at home; and now that our Colonial Empire has almost disappeared, it will become an exceptional attribute for our compatriots altogether, at home or overseas. Let me therefore try to describe what power is like, while I still regard its possession as a matter of course.

First of all, and contrary to legend, there is nothing particularly enjoyable about it. There is a certain show-off, *m'as-tu-vu* gratification: 'I'm the big boss, and all these chaps are waiting for me to make the big decision.' I am frankly not insensible to this sort of infantile thrill, but its effect is thin, and wears rapidly thinner. There is the much more solid satisfaction of being able to achieve results for one's territory that will really increase the happiness and well-being of its inhabitants. This satisfaction would be fine – if one ever had it in practice. Realistically speaking, to judge by my experience at least, that very seldom occurs. Instead one must live with an intense feeling of frustration and impatience. Other holders of power may have experiences in this respect that are less cynical-making. I speak here only for myself. But I suspect that, except for the most complacent, disappointment over what power might have achieved normally outweighs satisfaction at what it did.

The last thing that power does is to make one feel powerful. On the contrary, its most marked effect to my mind is to convince its holder that he is not even a free agent. So much of the

time his course is determined for him by pressures from different angles; like a balloon played on by converging jets of water, he can only go one way at any given moment. So many of his decisions are hand-to-mouth expedients designed not to achieve marvels but to avert catastrophes. This is not to say that power contains no place for foresight and long-term decision. It does, and sometimes those faculties can eliminate the sort of situation which will require reaction by expedient later on. It is this area of free decision which prevents the determinist view of history from being correct. Even so, in honesty I must confess that I found the so-called exercise of power to be only ten per cent choosing the path ahead, and ninety per cent bicycling along a tight-rope.

One of the most curious things about power is the contorting effect it has on those in its immediate neighbourhood. I do not speak here about its holder, but of those in close contact with him. Some will love him for having it – not because they want to gain anything for themselves thereby, but in an oddly disinterested way, as if the possession of power was something agreeable and attractive in itself. Disinterested, yes – and yet the same people find nothing to draw them to the holder of power once his power has been removed from him. No power-holder expects to be loved for himself. But one of his most startling observations is how his power can be loved for *itself* in the pure and absolute and categoric manner that only goes with the grandest passions.

Other people, more straightforwardly, are after your power for what they can get out of it. Some merely want you to use it in ways which will suit their advantage. Others – and these are more interesting – want to get bits of your power into their own hands and keep them there. It is with this category that the compulsion seems to be strongest and the contorting effect most marked. Men of principle, men of honour, men of culture and amenity, suddenly start rushing about like ravening animals. In certain natures there is a restlessness which goes very deep, right down to the individual human roots. When this restlessness focuses itself on power, the results can be strange indeed. It is a *sacra fames*, but not for gold; it drives on people of the most disparate natures and makes them react in identical ways.

Sometimes those close to power are driven on by others close to *them* – the attraction is as it were relayed at one remove through conductors who may or may not respond to it themselves.

The passion for power normally finds a decent suit of clothes to wear; it dresses itself up as some sort of conviction that more expression should be given to one principle or another. This is just as well, because power-lust running naked would be an unattractive sight. Sometimes the dress deceives the owner of the craving and he really believes he is operating on principle; others respect the decency of principle, but know very well the nudity beneath the clothes.

As always in political affairs, what I call the vacuum-factor plays an important part. If power is firmly held, and known to be so, the lust for it by others, though still in existence, remains latent and does not push for expression. It is when it seems to be weakly grasped that trouble begins.

These observations are drawn from experience during the period when real power was still concentrated in my hands as Governor. After the new constitution of January 1963, a great part of my authority in Aden was transferred to the Chief Minister and his colleagues. It is true that the High Commissioner still has considerable power. In this sense my transformation was different from that of my opposite numbers, the Governors of neighbouring British territories; these were rapidly turning into Governors-General, and finding that in that capacity they were quite untroubled by the problems of authority. One of them was lunching with me in Aden when I was called to the telephone on some business or other. 'You *are* lucky,' he said with feeling when I came back, 'being rung up at lunch-time. Nobody rings me up now at all.' The High Commissioner in Aden is still far removed from being a figurehead. Normally, however, I thought it best not to use the power which I still had in reserve, and to function by influence instead – in fact, a situation not so far away from that of an Ambassador in one of our more active Foreign Service posts.

The upshot of all this is that a Governor is exposed to two heavy personal pressures. He is surrounded by an unnatural and

chilling pomp which he may be able to reduce but will not be able to abolish altogether. In time it will establish an insidious spell over him. A reluctant appreciation of its purpose will lead him to regard it as a tiresome duty; imperceptibly duty will grow into routine, and routine into habit; until any unexpected deviation from the accepted honours and courtesies becomes a subject first of surprise and then of displeasure. The Governor will become an addict of protocol and may, if he is not careful, end up as its slave.

Secondly, he holds real power in his hands. This, whether one enjoys it or not, is a pretty strong experience. Personally I was glad to have had it, but it was not something that I wished to grow used to or to come to depend upon. I accepted as part of the game all the disillusionment and misanthropy which normally ensue, but I disliked acquiring the habit of what is basically, in Tacitus' phrase, more power than is good for a private citizen: *incivilis potestas*.

CHAPTER 20

Ambassador into Governor

My bad moment on the causeway, that first day in the Colony, when I thought that the Royal Horse Artillery might be brewing up a military coup, was typical of the difference between the jobs in Amman and Aden. Aden was far less day-to-day than Amman, and far less hand-to-mouth. At Amman, if the telephone rang in the Embassy house at night, I never wanted to pick up the receiver in case this was 'it'. Coming down from the jumpy altitude of the Transjordanian plateau to the phlegmatic sea-level of Aden was an immense psychological relief. At least there was no problem here of what to do in the event of sudden revolution – how to protect the local British community, what sort of face to put on when the mob was outside the Embassy baying for blood. All unlikely perhaps – but anyway it is part of an Ambassador's job to be prepared for the worst.

The unwinding process did not last long, however. It soon became evident to me that I had no cause to overdo the pleasures of relaxation. The responsibility in a Colonial post may be less red-hot than in certain foreign ones like Amman. But there is much more of it – and all of it belongs to the Governor.

At a time of crisis in a foreign post, the Ambassador plays a part which is necessarily peripheral. A crisis in a Colony, by contrast, is every bit of it 'on' the Governor. It is true that he does not have to contend with the nightmare problem of saving a local British community from the clutches of a local mob, without having anything to rely on except the security resources of a local government. But he has the fundamentally even more agonizing problems that come from direct executive responsibility; in the urban scene: police, troops, riots, bloodshed; in the

interior: raids, ambushes, punitive action by land or air. *On ne plaisante pas avec ces choses-là.*

Purely on the personal side I discovered that the changeover from Foreign to Colonial had very marked consequences. The Colonial Service is not a close-knit body like the Foreign Service. First, it is the remnant of a much bigger organization and one with much less of an interchange between posts; so that the members do not as a rule know, or know about, more than a relatively narrow circle of colleagues. (I am talking about the administrative branch of the Service; the various specialist branches of course had, and have, their own individual networks.) In addition, the Colonial Office is staffed by members of the Home Civil Service, so that interchanges between Whitehall and the field are the exception rather than, as under the Foreign Office, the rule – an important point of difference to which I shall revert.

The result is that in Colonial affairs the 'old boy' net is much less powerful than in diplomacy. This is true for those who have been in the business for years – it was still more so for me, coming in as a newcomer from outside.

I got an extremely friendly welcome from the officials at the Colonial Office. Most of them I already knew by reputation or as friends of friends. There was no need to lose any time in establishing a happy working relationship with each one of them.

At the Aden end things were more complicated. There was warmth in the reception which I had from the senior officials there – not just loyal acceptance of another Governor brought in from outside, but real warmth and a predisposition towards friendship. The trouble was that I knew none of them even by reputation. I had been told roughly how each one of them was regarded in the Colonial Office, but that was a cold and detached judgement which gave me no image of the living man. I longed for that corpus of folklore and gossip which encrusts itself so lovingly around the more senior members of the Foreign Service. For me, at any rate, working is above all a matter of assessment; once I know where I am everything becomes much easier. In a

post of command, assessment has two immediate objects: problems; and the people who advise one about them. One must either understand the problems thoroughly, or, until that is possible, one must know what quality of advice one is receiving about them.

I never realized, until I had to manage without it, the immense built-in advantage which the Foreign Service possesses in this respect. An Ambassador arrives at a new post. He knows it will take him time to master all its problems. Meanwhile, however, his Counsellor, who is an old friend, and his Head of Chancery, who is unknown personally but has been graphically described to him by several other old friends, will advise. He knows that the Head of Chancery is highly intelligent, but inclined to 'flap'; and the Counsellor is absolutely reliable, but rather slow to react. He thus understands from the outset how to treat advice from either of them – how much, as it were, to 'aim off' in order to hit the target. Soon perhaps, the Counsellor will be transferred, and the First Secretary will follow a year or two later; but by that time the Ambassador will have got the hang of the various problems themselves, and will be using them as a standard for assessing the judgement of new members of his staff. Thus as a rule an Ambassador without even knowing it has the immense advantage of never being required to deal at the same time with unknown problems and unknown advisers.

This was exactly my position in Aden, and the result was that for the first few months I was very much groping my way. My idea was gradually to build up an area of firm ground on which I would know exactly where I was. Problems being generally easier to assess than people, at least for me, this meant mastering the questions which were most pressing at the time, then judging my advisers by the advice which they gave me about them. Through this process I came to the conclusion that four or five of my senior staff were intellectually first-class, with no prejudices or axes to grind, and that their advice could accordingly be accepted with a minimum allowance for 'aiming off.' The relief which this brought me can be imagined. There is nothing worse than feeling oneself alone, in face of problems which are not

only new, but new in kind – as all administrative problems were to me at that time.

That feeling of loneliness is naturally increased by the much greater independence of London which Governors have compared to Ambassadors. Although I was prepared for this, it still came as a shock. I have always much enjoyed the reporter's job which is such a large part of one's task in a foreign post. In Amman I used to dictate almost all the reporting telegrams and dispatches myself. It came out, counting the crises and the lulls together, as perhaps one telegram per day and one dispatch every two months. My first six weeks or so in Aden I did not dictate so much as a single telegram to London, in fact none at all except some beginning: 'I was deeply touched by your message of good wishes.' It was months before I had a chance to dictate a dispatch.

All this was rather a jolt. Really, it gave me some idea of what it must be like to be dead – one of Homer's dead, squeaking and gibbering away on the periphery, with nobody listening. And yet, to be entirely honest, there were also consolations. A Governor's voice is not heard in Whitehall like an Ambassador's – agreed and accepted. But the reason why it is not heard is a flattering one. A Governor does not have to report continually, because he is master. He proposes, and he disposes. The main exception to this is, of course, the usual one of money. Anything with even the smell of extra expense to the British Government about it must be reported in the greatest detail – and several times, I may say, before anything can be expected to happen. Outside the field of money, however, and obviously also of the highest policy, Governors are not greatly given to reporting. When they do, the Colonial Office are surprised and touchingly grateful.

In Aden – I cannot speak about other territories – the Governor's decision had to range over a remarkable spectrum, from trivialities to questions of life and death.

Should rear-lights be carried on bicycles? At what time should open-air cinemas be required to close? Who should certify that meat slaughtered in the Colony was fit for human consumption? Then quite suddenly something would go wrong in the Protectorate and you were expected to decide about military operations

and air action. The first instinct of the good Foreign Service man is that questions of such importance must be referred to London for decision. It would be quite fruitless to do so however. The answer would come whizzing back from the Colonial Office like a hot potato: 'Thanks very much, but these matters are entirely within the discretion of the Governor.' There is nothing for it. Along the whole scale from the municipal to the punitive, the executive responsibility lies at the Governor's end. You act first and report – if necessary – afterwards.

In keeping with their higher degree of independence, Governors are treated by London with more signs of respect than Ambassadors. Governors' instructions, when they get them, are phrased with old-fashioned courtesy and lack the categoric tone which is normal between the Foreign Office and its heads of Mission abroad. One gets the impression that while Ambassadors are regarded as so many interchangeable agents to whom terse orders can be given in standard terms, Governors are treated as touchy, tricky potentates, to be kept the right side of and cajoled with individual-type instructions and met on arrival at London Airport by a member of the Department. The whole thing is make-believe, of course. Governors are just as much servants of the Crown as anybody else and just as liable to instant dismissal. But there is for the history-fancier a good deal of evocative charm in being handled with caution by the metropolitan authorities, rather as if one was the Roman Proconsul of Arabia, or the Byzantine Strategos of the Saracenic Theme.

Moreover, while the ambassadorial currency has been devalued by inflation, Governors have been simultaneously acquiring a marked scarcity value. They have the rather touching appeal of an obsolescent species – massive, fierce-looking, slow-moving animals, stamping and bellowing away in their reserve. Let them roar their heads off – soon there won't be any more of them left. With a body as big as a locomotive, they have a brain the size of a nut – how *can* you expect them to survive? That, at least, seemed to be the general philosophy underlying the tolerance and good humour with which my representations, however immoderately expressed, were received in Whitehall.

CHAPTER 21

Foreign and Colonial

The Governor's relationship with the British officials serving under him is vastly different from the Ambassador's. There is a family feeling about all Embassies except the biggest or the most unhappy. There is the general *esprit de corps* of the Foreign Service, plus a particular, almost regimental pride which good Missions acquire: the sense of being more efficient and more effective than other British posts in the area. In addition, there is the foreign background which, however friendly and congenial, tends to bring out the otherwise heavily dormant national consciousness of our compatriots. Indeed in foreign countries the local British community sometimes acquires that most un-British thing, a feeling of brotherhood. The annual Queen's Birthday party at the Embassy can take on something of the character of a national demonstration.

The situation is quite different in Colonial territories. First of all the Colony is British soil, so there is normally no sense of solidarity amongst foreigners. Secondly, the administration is too large for any general *esprit de corps*. The technical departments are usually united in a common dislike of the central Government as embodied in the Secretariat – and that is about all. Exceptionally there is one smallish body which does have a strong *esprit de corps* – the political officers in the field. They are linked by knowing the local language, with all the private jokes which that involves, by a corpus of similar experience in the same or similar places, and also by the sense of individual isolation caused by the conditions in which they work. Here also, however, the community spirit is all too apt to express itself in a dislike of the central Government. So far as concerns Aden, this is a

legacy from the days of rule from Bombay and New Delhi – the bad old tradition of hostility between the political officer and the Secretariat wallah. But I believe that as a phenomenon it has not been unknown in other territories which have no historical connection with the Raj.

In the Governor's case, the family relationship is confined to his personal staff, consisting of an A.D.C. or two and a shorthand-typist or two. The rest of the administration is a large, relatively remote machine on which, despite his greater power, he makes far less impact than an Ambassador does on an Embassy.

Quite apart from the relations of the Governor or Ambassador with his staff, there is a big difference between the two Services in themselves. Their job requires Foreign Service members to be sophisticated and socially quick-witted; not only good mixers but good talkers as well. They do not always turn out so in practice, but that is the general idea. Members of the Colonial Service do not need, or usually have, the superficial, dining-out qualities of the diplomat. They have, however, another quality which he usually lacks. Unspoilt by the corrupting environment of large capitals, they can and do practise a single-minded idealism which is rare among their opposite numbers in the Foreign Service. Indeed, while the diplomat is more than usually rattled around by the storms of modern existence, the average Colonial administrator in his territory is sheltered from them to a quite exceptional degree. As a result, the Colonial Service preserves a number of nineteenth-century British qualities in prime condition, as if under glass. There is a high seriousness, a touch of rugged Victorian *virtus*. There is a heavy, pipe-smoking virility which goes with these qualities. Christian names, like close friendships, both of which are two-a-penny in the world of diplomacy, come hardly to these massive Empire-builders. A semi-official letter, which in the Foreign Service would begin: 'My Dear Jack', and end: 'Yours ever, Charlie', would translate in Colonial terms as: 'Dear Carstairs, ... Yours sincerely, Carruthers.' A curious result of its isolation is that the Colonial Service is one of the last enclaves in our national life to resist the invasion of American manners. The cigarette between courses

at table is as unusual as the instantaneous Christian name.

Coming to analyse the idealism of the Colonial Service, I find two strains in it: the patriotic and the humane. I should say that most members of the Service have both, and that few indeed are without either. There is not necessarily anything conscious or articulate about it, but the principles are there all the same.

So far as concerns patriotism, a feeling of national mission is accepted without discussion as part of the furniture. Indeed this could not well be otherwise; without it, our continued existence as a Colonial power would make no sense at all. The question is, of course, tied up with our recognized duty to prepare Colonial territories for independence. It is, however, exactly this obligation which in present conditions brings out at its strongest the sense of a specific British mission in the Colonial field. We have accepted responsibilities towards the people in our territories; how at this of all moments can we abandon those responsibilities? How can we leave the people concerned in the lurch at such a critical stage in their development?

At this point the patriotic thread which I have singled out in the idealism of members of the Colonial Service ties up with the other strand, which I have called the humane one. By this I mean a sense of devotion to one's fellow beings outside the obvious bonds of patriotism; that is to say, in the present context, to the peoples of the territories where one serves.

For *subordinate* members of the Colonial Service there is no conflict between these two principles. It is their job to do the best they can for their territories with the means at their disposal. In so doing, they are carrying out a patriotic duty by putting into practical effect the concept of a British mission and purpose in these areas; they are also serving the wider interests of humanity as manifested there. Both searchlights are, as it were, focused on the same target. It is an integrated task. In fact the humane motive very often gets the upper hand and the officer believes it his duty to do what he considers best for 'his people' without being distracted by other considerations. Nobody regards it as anything but normal and there is no question of transferring such officers before they get too involved emotionally. Indeed

this state of affairs is very much to the credit of the officer and of his Service. It seems to me that, in any future summing-up, the self-sacrificing devotion of the administrator to the interests of his charges will be seen as the peculiar, distinctive glory of the British Colonial record. There is, however, a less agreeable rider to this which I shall propound in a moment.

In the Colonial world the conflict of principles operates acutely on one class of people only, namely, on Governors. It is they who in making recommendations to London have to weigh up the interests of their territory as such, and those of Britain in it, and to produce proposals reconciling both so far as that is possible.

Sometimes this is relatively easy. In Aden, for instance, both British and local interests in my time demanded the same thing: the continued presence of the British base, and – promoting this and at the same time being promoted by it – the increased economic prosperity and political cohesion of the area as necessary prerequisites for independence. I am lucky indeed to have had as my experience of Colonial government such a relatively integrated and non-schizophrenic job to do. Aden is particularly fortunate in not having a white settler problem, with all the agonizing conflict of loyalty which that is bound to generate. The other type of case where such conflict arises is in territories where the British Government wish to maintain a military base and the population oppose it. The classic example of this is Cyprus. During the critical last phase of our rule there I was next door in Jordan and was able to follow the course of events closely. Watching my friend Sir Hugh Foot at work on the appalling problems which faced him, I felt my job in Amman was by comparison a schoolboy lark with fireworks. It was my first realization of the burdens which a Governor in a really difficult territory has to carry.

In such a position it seems to me that the Governor is right if he decides it is his duty to advocate the interests of his territory in so far as they conflict with those of Britain. In doing this he is not, as it were, 'going native' and forgetting his British origins. He can be sure that whatever the British Government may decide

will take full account of British interests, and there is no need for him to be more royalist than the king. On the other hand he can also be sure that, if he does not himself act as advocate for the interests of his territory, no one else in the British official world will do so, and the case will go by default. This is one of those fairly frequent situations in which, for whatever reason, a British representative overseas must be prepared to speak his mind forcefully, and give up any thought of winning the charm prize in Whitehall. He will, however, do this more effectively if the British Government know that he is at the same time fully alive to the purely British interest involved and has paid every attention to it in forming his recommendations.

The main field of conflict between home and Colonial interests is the financial one. It is here that the Governor must be prepared to do battle with London throughout his term of office.

The clash is a genuine one. The home Government have the responsibility of allotting priorities for the use of our limited resources – priorities both between general types of expenditure, and also, within the category of expenditure on dependent territories, between one territory and another. In the field the question presents itself differently: are we doing *enough* to bring our territory on, in proportion to the economic progress of the rest of the world, and in particular of neighbouring independent territories – taking account of the advantages which they have in the way of American, United Nations and other international aid denied to our own territory because of its Colonial status? If the answer to this is no, then are we properly carrying out our responsibilities? How do we justify our conception of a specific British mission in these territories if the main practical effect of our presence there is to hold them back economically? If the home Government's requirement for parsimony is so strong, is it really reconcilable with any sort of Colonial responsibilities?

It is not for me to answer these questions. Quite apart from the understandable tight-fistedness of the home Government, there is another influence of restrictive type, this time operating in the field. The 'Arcadian' school of thought in British Colonial administration is not extinct – the tradition which believes it is

our duty to shelter our territories, to let them evolve in their own way, and at their own pace, without worrying about the rate of material progress realized in comparable territories outside British control. This theory has been practised, consciously or unconsciously, in various areas for which we have been responsible over the last eighty years or so. It has the highest motives behind it and also a certain rationale. The modern world with its materialistic civilization *is* unattractive and, in comparison with it, pre-industrial, pre-capitalistic forms of society seem to have much in their favour. Nevertheless, it is a view to which I take the strongest exception. Beastly as our civilization is, it is greatly preferable to all the more archaic societies put together. The point about it is that it gives us the key – the opportunity to lead a fuller and more worthwhile life of our own choosing. If most of us refuse to use the key, and prefer to remain stuck among the material advantages, that is surely *our* fault and not our civilization's. Certainly it is not a valid reason for withholding the key from peoples under our administration. Who are we, after all, to decide that they should be denied the opportunities which we possess, simply because we misuse those opportunities ourselves?

The Arcadian thesis does not stand up for a moment to serious examination, but it remains a plausible dinner-table and club-bar line and its influence cannot even now be written off as entirely negligible.

This brings me by way of conclusion to a general comment. We have a Colonial Service which, unlike the Foreign Service or the Armed Forces, functions only in the field and has no part in the central direction carried out from headquarters in Whitehall. This has contributed to a detachment of spirit which is both admirable and regrettable. It is admirable in the idealistic devotion which members of the Service bring to their task, and particularly to the interests of the peoples whom they administer, as they see those interests. It is regrettable in that the consequent loss of contact with London and with the outside world as a whole makes members of the Service less capable of seeing those interests as they really are and less effective in securing the

requisite economic assistance. Here we have in briefest form the most likely future verdict on our colonial administration: infinite personal devotion, plus inadequate attention to material progress.

This is indeed summary treatment of a vast subject. To follow it out properly would need a new book. In touching it at all I am conscious of my temerity. Who am I to pass any sort of judgement on the Colonial Service – someone who served only as Governor, for only three years, in a highly untypical, peripheral territory like Aden? Nobody can really know about the Colonial Service unless he has sweated all the way up the ladder; unless in particular he has been a District Commissioner or the equivalent and has thus acquired that 'D.C. outlook' which is like the Ark of the Covenant, or the corporate conscience of the Service; and above all unless he has served in at least one of those great African territories which were regarded as the Service's classic show-places, and into which, in terms of man-power, its main effort went.

While admitting my presumption, I do not regret having got on to this ground. Nobody can write critically about a subject if he has spent all his life inside it. Nor, however, can he begin to understand it if he has never looked inside it at all. I can claim with some reason that my experience of the Colonial Service has that exact degree of superficiality which most entitles me to a hearing.

Nor, even in the African scene, am I a complete interloper. For some time, just after the war, I had the Sudan desk in our Embassy in Cairo, which was then to all intents and purposes the foreign office of the Sudan Government. This gave me opportunities for touring in the great Condominium, and for watching the work of its British rulers, who, although separate from the Colonial Service, operated on much the same principles and constituted indeed a sort of Platonic idea of the British administrator in Africa. Sir Douglas Newbold, who as Civil Secretary in Khartoum headed the administration under the Governor-General, was a liberal and far-sighted man; in the early forties, he saw that the rate of climb towards independence was not steep enough and used all his influence to bend it upwards. A railway-based tour in the Eastern Sudan which I made with him had a

profound effect on my ideas about Colonial rule. It was exactly like travelling, in a rather slow special train, with one of Plato's philosopher kings.

There is another link with Africa as well. One dark afternoon at the Colonial Office, working on some Aden problem in the room of an Under-Secretary who happened to be away, I looked up abstractedly from my papers, to find my great-great-grandfather, in the Byronesque splendour of the Brockedon portrait, looking at me from the wall with a penetrating Celtic eye – Richard Lander, the adventurous innkeeper's son from Truro, who was killed travelling in Africa, but not before he had solved the age-old conundrum of where the Niger comes out into the sea. The four generations since his death had seen out the full cycle of British rule in Africa.

CHAPTER 22

British aims in South Arabia

In determining the objects of our policy in this area it is, I suggest, essential to avoid both sentiment and dogma.

So far as sentiment goes we must clear our minds of what I call 'gunboat romanticism' – the belief that in the Arab world we are still operating in the generation of Kitchener, of Allenby, or even of Killearn. The truth is, we are not; and the sooner we can adapt ourselves to the facts of present-day life the better.

Nor, however, should we go to the opposite extreme of the spectrum and, instead of being hypnotized by our own past, fall flat on our faces before some imaginary 'wave of the future'. Historical determinism has always seemed to me wrong because, while I admit that, over ninety per cent of the field, political figures are not free agents, the determinist thesis takes no account of the remaining ten per cent where individual decision is all-important. Human qualities and defects *can* affect the course of events, and it is absurd to fall back on the argument that these qualities and defects are themselves determined. Take, for example, a Colonial territory which has a bad Governor for, say, three years, and then a good Governor for the next three years. The change of Governor makes all the difference to the well-being of the territory; are we to say that the first Governor was the typical determined product of *his* age, and that the second one stood in the same relationship to *his* age? Supposing they were both born in the same year? The whole thing simply does not make sense. People who like to write history before it happens are liable to make very serious mistakes – particularly in the Middle East where unpredictable individual qualities have always counted more than elsewhere. (Why? Perhaps a wisp of

Roman *humanitas* transmitted via Byzantium and the Caliphate of Damascus?) In this area, of all others, we should reject the guidance of dogma and lean more heavily even than usual on pragma, that traditional British ally and guide.

If that is correct, the safest way of determining our aims in South Arabia will be by a hard-headed calculation of the two different interests involved – those of Britain, and of the indigenous inhabitants.

The British interests in the area are familiar. The official White Paper on Defence published in 1962 stated that it was the British Government's intention to station troops in Aden 'permanently'. The reasons behind this requirement are threefold: first, global strategy, namely Aden's value as a staging post on the way to Malaysia and Australia; secondly, oil strategy, namely the value as a base and acclimatization area for the defence of the oilfields of the Persian Gulf; and, thirdly, local strategy, namely the value as a base for the protection of Arab and other allies. It is possible that one or other of these three requirements may fall by the wayside before the rest of them. (I will not go here into the dispute about whether the oil of the Persian Gulf can best be secured by military or commercial means.) It is, however, unlikely that all three requirements will disappear simultaneously for some time. On the contrary, it is possible that other reasons for needing Aden may arise as well. For example, the withdrawal of British forces from Kenya could contribute to that effect, so long at any rate as our responsibilities in the South African Protectorates remain undiminished.

The indigenous interest in South Arabia is equally plain: to be prepared for independence as soon as possible. This implies that the territory must as far as possible be unified; that the resultant unity must as far as possible be stabilized; and that it must be made as self-sufficient as possible economically. What prospects are there that these three conditions will be fulfilled at an early date?

Efforts towards the unification of South Arabia began in the middle nineteen-fifties, and the first major step was taken in 1959 when, with British encouragement, six States of the Western

Aden Protectorate united to form the Federation of Arab Amirates of the South. The second step, as told in this book, was taken in January 1963 when Aden, though still remaining under British sovereignty, joined the Federation, which now comprises fourteen States under a shorter and more convincing title: The Federation of South Arabia.

At the time the wisdom of bringing Aden into the Federation was much discussed in the British press: Why have yet another busted Federation? Why proceed with the merger in the face of the manifest opposition to it in Aden? There are good answers to these questions which may be worth recapitulating here.

The Arabs, unlike the Africans or West Indians, really care about unity. They are like the Germans before Bismarck: they have a feeling of brotherhood in their blood, and the futility of their own attempts so far to realize it in practice is deeply disappointing and frustrating to them. The failure of Federations in other parts of our Commonwealth proves nothing whatever in respect of South Arabia. In this area the whole logic of economics and of history required us to remove artificial barriers, some of which we had ourselves imposed.

Nor, in following this course, would it have been right for us to be inhibited by distorted versions of our own democratic beliefs. Among the 100,000 inhabitants of Aden (excluding the floating population of transient workers from the Yemen and elsewhere) the idea of merger raised certain doubts, but presented certain advantages. To the half million inhabitants of the old Federation, however, it was a question of life or death. If Aden had refused to merge with them and had evolved separately towards independence, this would have cut off their only access to the sea and forcibly reorientated them towards the Yemen – a gloomy enough prospect under the Imam, and a desperate one under the distraught Republic. It would have been a strange misapplication of our principles to insist that the Adenese, being urban and relatively sophisticated, should be allowed to decide the question of merger by their own vote, while the inhabitants of the original Federation, although five times as numerous and

no less vitally concerned, should not be consulted at all – presumably on the theory that as illiterate rifle-carrying tribesmen they somehow counted as second-class human beings.

It was difficult to assess the extent of opposition to the merger in Aden itself. Personally I was sure that, at the time it was carried out, it was already backed by a majority of the Adenese, and that since it came into effect the number of Adenese who realized its advantages further increased. It was certain in any case that the entry of Aden into the Federation was approved by the great majority of those who lived in the present Federal area as a whole, including both Aden and the interior.

The merger will be strengthened, and the immediate process of unification essentially completed, if we can bring into the enlarged Federation the only important area still remaining outside it – namely, the Qa'iti and Kathiri States of the Eastern Protectorate. This will be difficult but not necessarily impossible.

Unification has thus made good progress, so far, and may go further. Unfortunately the need for stabilization will still remain, and that is something far harder to achieve. One sort of stability is ensured now, with British help. What measures can we take to ensure that a different sort of stability, the stability of full independence, will be maintained after our departure? We can, of course, do our best to build up an efficient indigenous administration – that requirement is quite essential, and everything possible is already being done to meet it. But in itself it is not enough. We must also find a sure antidote to certain poisons introduced into Arabia by the West: first the rifle; and, secondly, the tank and the jet aircraft. I refer to these weapons in their civic and not in their military aspect. They have, in fact, given new scope and portent to two ancient Arab political institutions: the feud, and the coup.

Margery Perham writes: 'Once the white man had entered Africa, one might almost say, once his modern rifle had reached Africa, the option was no longer between the old freedom and the new colonial rule. It was between that rule and anarchy . . . Government with all its faults was a thousand times better than the unregulated contact of men, white, brown or black, armed

with terrible power to corrupt and destroy.'[1] Exactly the same is true of South Arabia. Typical was the pathetic state of affairs found in the Eastern Protectorate by Ingrams, and so well described by him in *Arabia and The Isles*: chaos, anarchy, terror, whole rich areas out of cultivation, all because of the lethal extension given by the rifle to the range of the traditional Arab feud. This is, to my mind, a shocking example of the way in which nineteenth-century Europe, in its dealings with other races, administered the kiss of death. During the phase of Colonial Office pacification in the nineteen-forties and fifties, the problem of the rifle was brought under some form of control – completely, thanks to Ingrams, in the Qa'iti and Kathiri States, except for their sparsely populated tribal areas; in the Western Protectorate (more difficult because almost completely tribal) under practical control, except in the remaining pockets of unadministered territory. Throughout the area tribalism is on the decline, and with it the deadly political effects of the rifle may be expected still further to diminish.

The more recent poison of the tank and the jet aircraft is a much more difficult one to counter. So far as the rifle went, its effect in tribal hands was unsettling enough, but at least it was fairly easy to defend a royal or presidential palace against attacks with small arms, and the most practical way of changing a régime remained the classic method of individual assassination – never easy, unless you had a supply of fanatics ready to die in the act, which is a rarity in Arabia and most other places too. Modern military techniques have altered all this. It is now child's play for a few young officers in tanks and jet aircraft to storm the palace, kill or capture the ruler, take over the radio station – and they are home. They need no programme; they need no popular support; all they need to know is how to squeeze the trigger in their vehicle, and subsequently how to prevent other young officers from squeezing the same triggers against them. Hence the risk of a growing dichotomy in the Arab world, a split between the administrators and the conspirators. The people who know how to use power don't know how to defend it against

[1] *The Colonial Reckoning*, Collins, 1961, p. 134.

modern arms. The people who know how to seize it with the help of modern arms don't know how to use it. Administrators cannot conspire, conspirators cannot administer. True, some of the tank-coups have resulted in an improvement on the régime overthrown. The worst factor, however, is the chronic instability which the new revolutionary technique has introduced. Modern Arabia in this respect recalls the Roman Empire in the interval between Marcus Aurelius and Diocletian – the era of guardroom emperors and praetorian revolutions.

The middle-distance prospect is therefore certainly gloomy. Nevertheless, the Arab has important assets which no assessment should overlook. He is the product of an ancient civilization and an admirable religion, an individual who, however backward he may be materially, is usually integrated and free from sentiments of inferiority. My long-term impression about the Arabs is optimistic, at least in this respect. In time they will somehow get over the tank, as they have already more or less got over the rifle. So far as South Arabia goes, we cannot find any means of guaranteeing stability in the mid-term period, that is to say, in the years immediately following independence. I believe that we must simply recognize this fact, and that it should not in itself deter us from granting independence when the other pre-conditions for it are adequately satisfied.

The third requirement is that the area should be made as nearly as possible self-sufficient economically. It is true that states have been known to achieve political independence while still highly dependent economically on others. This is, however, a difficult and unenviable situation. So long as we British are responsible for an area, it is our plain duty to do all we can to prepare it for independence economically as well as politically. In the case of South Arabia, this means above all diversifying Aden's unhealthy concentration on oil. That concentration is at present complete, since the three main props of Aden's economic prosperity are the refinery, the port (bunkering), and the British forces (protection of Kuwait and the Persian Gulf). Aden is the citadel of the oil-burning age. It would be a serious blot on our record as an imperial power if we launched an independent South

Arabia on the world, at a time when nuclear energy was looming up as a substitute for internal combustion, without any adequate steps towards economic diversification.

There are in fact several other baskets in which the local eggs can be distributed. The long-term future of Aden itself must lie in being the base port and the commercial and industrial centre of South Arabia. An independent specialist inquiry into the operation of the port of Aden has been set on foot, to advise how this ultimate object can be achieved. Measures to promote industrialization in a co-ordinated manner are also in hand.

In addition Aden will depend economically more and more on progress in the interior. The main line of development there must for the present be in primary production, and, for this, communications must be improved. For agriculture the marketing aspect is all-important, and plans for further help to farming throughout the Protectorate as a whole have been framed with close regard to this aspect. The production of cotton in the Lahej and Abyan deltas and of fruit and vegetables in the coastal plain and the plateaux of the interior is already forging ahead. Lesser cotton-growing areas are being developed around Ahwar in the Lower Aulaqi State and around the massive new barrage at Meifa Hajr in the westernmost part of the Qa'iti country.

The field where there are possibilities of the most striking development is that of fisheries. The Gulf of Aden is, in fact, stuffed with tuna and other edible fish. The main practical problem is to find out at what depth below the surface the fish may be feeding at any given moment. This, in turn, depends on the temperature of the sea. A new Japanese technique, using a long nylon line with baited hooks going down from it at intervals, and testing the temperature of the sea beforehand to find out the right depth at which to operate, is being explored and is yielding astonishing results. While in other waters a fifteen per cent catch had been regarded as reasonably good hitherto, the percentage of catches in the Gulf of Aden has gone up to fifty and more. Similarly new techniques for catching crayfish in the Eastern Protectorate are also being developed. Arrangements are in hand for freezing, canning and marketing all these products, and the

outlook for the whole fishing industry of South Arabia is decidedly promising.

Finally, there are useful possibilities in the field of tourism. For four months of the year South Arabia has an ideal climate. It offers wonderful scenery of varied types, coastal, mountainous and desert; picturesque and friendly peoples; and remarkable sites to visit, from the ruined cities of the pre-Islamic age down to the modern mud-brick skyscrapers of the Wadi Hadhramaut. Expert advice on the possibilities of developing tourism has recently been supplied to the Governments of the Federation, of Aden and of the Qa'iti and Kathiri States. Several steps are needed: more and better hotels in Aden and up country; better communications throughout the Protectorate; better publicity for the attractions of the area. In addition much can be done to make the transit visitor to Aden from passing ships enjoy his hours ashore more and, of course, pay suitably for the advantage. In particular, thanks largely to the generosity and civic spirit of Tony Besse (of whom more below) a museum is to be built in the area where ships' passengers land, in order to house an important and spectacular collection of South Arabian antiquities belonging to the Aden Government and including pieces of gold treasure from the pre-Islamic kingdom of Ausan.

Measures to give effect to each of these projects are in hand; and all that is required for their success is, as usual, more money from the British Government. It is unfortunate that this requirement should have come up in acute form at a time when we have such heavy terminal commitments in Kenya and elsewhere. The scale of assistance needed in South Arabia is, however, minute compared either with that required in other territories, or with the relative importance of Aden in our present strategic scheme of things.

So much for the three aspects in which progress must be realized before independence. If I may make a personal guess, they seem to point towards independence being given in the second half of this decade – always provided that we can retain the effective use of the Aden base for as long as we may require it after independence.

From my service in North as well as South Arabia, I would say that the British connection with Arab territories has shown a certain normal pattern of development. The first stage is a colonial relationship: Colony, Protectorate or Mandate. This is succeeded by a period of independence conditioned by a treaty of alliance under which Britain retains *de jure* an exclusive status of one sort or another. (I distinguish this type of treaty from those of protection and advice, which belong in the first stage, namely to our relations with a Protectorate.) The last phrase comes with the abrogation of the treaty and the establishment of a normal diplomatic relationship, which, however, need not preclude a special British position of *de facto* type.

My personal experience has brought me into this cycle at two different points. In Aden I have seen two of the final stages of a colonial relationship: the régime of a Governor-in-Council ruling directly through local Ministers drawn from a Legislative Council with an elected majority; and the régime of a local Council of Ministers under a High Commissioner sitting in the background on reserve powers which in practice he preferred not to use. In Jordan I have served as Ambassador at the end of a treaty régime complete with British bases and British subsidy, and at the beginning of the final stage of evolution, where formally speaking our relations with Jordan were straightforwardly diplomatic.

Apart from the pressure of world opinion, we have in my view motives of self-interest for terminating the colonial phase as early as possible. It creates on our side the problems of a split personality. The job of a Governor is to govern, and of a British Governor to govern on the principles of Westminster and Whitehall. Unfortunately, however, those principles are too gentle for the good government of other races with hotter blood than ourselves. The Governor is thus squeezed in a painful dilemma between the local requirement for summary action if order and stability are to be maintained, and the need of the British Government to justify its policies in Parliament. In addition, the last phase of a colonial régime presents a special problem of conscience for the Governor and his English staff in

the need to reconcile the traditional austere standards of our colonial administration with the normal and understandable political requirements of local Ministers – for example, for special favour to be shown to their supporters in matters where the British tradition requires the Government to be impartial.

For what my Jordanian experience is worth, it suggests that the treaty phase also has serious disadvantages. A French criticism of the Treaty of Versailles was that it was too soft for the hardness which it contained. Anglo-Arab treaties of the traditional type are too equal for their implications of inequality. To my mind the post-treaty phase seems to provide the best means of combining a British helping hand, if required, with the dignity of the Arab beneficiary. (I am convinced that a large part of our misfortunes in the Arab world can be ascribed to previous British actions which have offended the dignity of our subjects and clients.) In this phase, the Arab country's freedom of choice becomes a reality. If British assistance is still needed, it will be on a consultative rather than an advisory basis, that is to say, our influence will be exerted through personal contact and moral suasion rather than by any prescriptive right to impose it.

If, however, the Arabs do want British help on this basis, I suggest that we should be fully disposed to give it, provided that it suits our particular interest and that we can afford to do so. There are those who say that we should not give assistance on any account; that we must now disengage totally from the Arab world, not only *de jure* but *de facto*; and that if an Arab country asks us for any aid of a type which would imply a special relationship with us, we must decline this overture with virtuous horror on the grounds that any such relationship is very bad for the Arabs. The underlying theory is that we know better than the Arabs what is really good for them. This sort of Victorian-governess attitude has always struck me as inverted imperialism of the worst type. If the Arabs want British help, and if we can give it, let them have it. If we cannot give it, let us tell them so. But let us at all events avoid refusing the help on the grounds that they ought not to have asked for it.

I believe that Arabia is the last place for any form of universal

remedy. Each territory differs from the others, each demands its own treatment. The urge for unity is strong and natural, and praiseworthy in so far as it is not associated with chauvinism or with hatred of the West. It has been British policy to promote it so far as we can consistently with our interests. In practice, South Arabia seems one of the few areas where substantial steps towards such unity within our lifetime are at all feasible.

We should thus make all the necessary preparations for independence as quickly as possible. If these include, for example, a forceful lead towards unity, as one of the essential pre-conditions, we should not shrink from giving it. The truth is that the colonial relationship demands from the administering power a certain amount of enlightened authoritarianism. As long as responsibility is formally in its hands, it cannot escape this duty. If the duty is firmly and intelligently discharged, there will be no cause for shame and regret.

CHAPTER 23

Departure

It is normal for Colonial Governors who are giving up their posts to wish to convince themselves and everyone else that they are handing over to their successors a territory in perfect political and economic order. Unfortunately I myself could have no illusions in that respect.

So far at least the merger seemed to have 'taken' reasonably well, but it was still possible that it could become unstuck if events in Aden took an adverse course. All of the leaders in both the Federation and Aden who had shown themselves to be friendly and co-operative with us had in them an element of nationalism which in certain conditions could easily develop into hostility towards Britain. Outside Aden, the political institutions of the Federation and its component States were only just beginning to evolve. It would be a mistake to try to rush these tribal societies into the parliamentary practices of the contemporary Western world. Nevertheless, with the opening up of communications between the interior and the outside world via Aden, I thought it pressingly necessary that the Federation should improve the picture of itself which it presented, particularly in matters affecting human rights. The slave-trade in South Arabia had been abolished long since; the condition of slavery no longer existed either, but this should be made publicly clear beyond possibility of mistake. There were other ways too in which Federal and State institutions could be improved. When I drew their attention to this situation, the Ministers answered that they were aware of it and would take all suitable action to put things right.

Economically the situation in the area was certainly better

than I had found it three years previously, but there were still great strides that needed to be made. All areas, even the most prosperous, have pockets of squalor and misery in them. In my own country and in foreign ones where I had served I had, regrettably, never felt that these matters were any urgent concern of mine. It was only the possession of executive power in Aden which suddenly jerked me alive to a sense of responsibility for others. The shanty-villages behind the imposing modern façades of Maalla; the fly-swarming back-streets of provincial capitals in the Protectorate; the sickness, the debility, the blindness – all this was suddenly brought home to me as a wrong which in the first place it was for *me* to do what I could to right. It came as a shocking perception. As a result of it I redoubled my efforts to obtain more funds from London for development and to get suitable priority given to expenditure on social services. At the same time there was the whole field of charitable effort which needed support. My wife felt particularly strongly the pathetic condition of women in the area, and while she was well enough herself gave up most of her energies to promoting girls' education and the health and welfare of women. At the Aden Government's farewell party for me, what touched me more than anything else was the delicate idea of raising a substantial sum by public subscription for me to divide among our favourite charities. It gave me vivid pleasure to think of the effects which this share-out would have on the little blind boys at the Reilly Centre, and how many more playgrounds the Aden Children's Society would be able to construct for children of all races to play in safely, away from the whizzing traffic of modern Aden.

In spite of having finished my tour there, I cannot get rid of this emotion, try as I may. It is true that one can still contribute to the charities which do their best to meet these crying needs in the area.[1] Alas! acts of that sort may ease the mind, they can never silence the heart.

Notwithstanding all this, I felt no need to depart in too pessimistic a mood. Under Zein Baharoon Aden seemed to be making

[1] Half of any money which this book makes for its author will go to charitable organizations operating in Aden or the Protectorate.

a reasonably good start to its new chapter. I received a similarly encouraging impression from my farewell tours in the Protectorate. I found the Federation generally in a healthy condition, and the Qa'iti and Kathiri States eager to join it

In April the Federal common market provided for in the London Agreement had been introduced, and all State Customs barriers had been swept away inside the Federation. This had an immediate effect throughout the area. The cultivator in the Federation still received the same price for his fruit and vegetables in the Aden market, which of course functioned in terms of supply and demand. In bringing his produce in, however, he no longer had either to damage it by unloading it each time a State boundary was crossed, or to reduce his own profit margin by paying duty at each barrier. Similarly, in Aden, he could now spend all the money which he had received for his produce on goods in the shops without, as before, having to keep money back in his pocket to pay duties on these goods when he brought them through the various State Customs barriers on the way to his home in the interior. The cultivator thus benefited in respect of both journeys, and the Aden shopkeeper did well out of the process. This visible result of the merger agreement did more than anything else to bring home its advantages. It was true unfortunately that, so far, much of the financial benefits seemed to have got stuck in the pockets of the merchants; but there was good reason to hope that soon they would begin to reach the consumer generally. Certainly trade was already moving more freely both inside the Federation itself and across its frontier with the Southern Yemen.

My farewell visits were a jumble of impressions. New hospitals, new schools, new houses, new roads – not enough of any of them, but better than nothing.

A last visit to Dathina and the Audhali country, under the auspices of Sultan Saleh who, as Federal Minister of Internal Security, had come to play an essential part in the settlement of inter-tribal or inter-State disputes throughout the whole Federation. His reputation for wisdom and impartiality had steadily grown, and I felt that I could indeed be proud of my putative schoolfellow. We drove with him to the coast down the spec-

tacular Urqūb Pass, the track winding between enormous shiny nuggets of black lava. In the Fadhli State the fisherman-Sultan had been deposed some months before by the Council of the ruling family, who found him too eccentric altogether. He was still living peacefully in the State, and his cousin, Naib Ahmed, had taken over as Sultan. I stayed with him and his beautiful young wife in brand-new air-conditioned comfort in Zinjibar. Abyan had had a bumper cotton crop that year. New stone houses for cultivators were shooting up in the mud-brick streets of Zinjibar and Ja'ar, and the Eastern Bank had opened a branch which did thriving business. It was heartening to see the urban boom conditions of Aden reproduced however modestly in the farming world. In Lahej also there had been a record crop of cotton, and this had been greatly helped by the new barrage at Ras El Wadi, which the forethought and persistence of Sultan Fadhl had brought into being in spite of many obstacles and disappointments. In Dhala, Amir Sha'aful had continued to extend his control. Under the stimulating influence of a vigorous young political officer, tracks had been pierced up the Jebel Jihaf and into the Azraqi country by teams from the Federal Regular Army and the Federal Guard working in hot competition. In Beihan there was a condition of stand-to on the sensitive stretch of frontier with the Yemen in the Wadi Harīb. I toured the advanced posts in this area and found the morale of the Federal Forces and Beihani tribesmen to be high. It was a welcome change after the depressed days of October 1962. I was sad indeed to say good-bye to the warm and easygoing hospitality of my friends Amir Saleh and his father, Sherif Hussein. At least I was leaving them in a reasonably hopeful frame of mind. In the Upper Aulaqi Sultanate, Sultan 'Rufus' had been removed by a family council; like his fisherman colleague, he had become too eccentric. I did not visit the Sultanate this time, but heard that it was likely to apply for accession to the Federation before long. Next door, in Said, capital of the Upper Aulaqi Sheikhdom, we dined with Amir Mohammed and then said good-bye to him in the courtyard of his house before walking home by lantern light. The great concourse of guests

and tribesmen and soldiers and negroes made a splendid Rembrandtesque scene under the chiaroscuro of the pressure lamps – beards, daggers, rifles, sashes and turbans of all colours, eyes flashing from swarthy, hawk-like faces, and, in the middle of it all, the Amir's nephew, Mohammed Farid, the Federation's young Oxford-trained Minister for External Affairs, who had come out to his ancestral grassroots for the occasion, looking perfectly at home with a Sten in his hand instead of a pouchful of diplomatic notes.

My conclusion after these farewell tours in the area was that, although many important questions still remained unsolved, at least I was handing the place over to my successor in one of its temporary moods of relaxation and euphoria, and that the long-term outlook was not too bad, providing that over the next few years the British Government knew what they wanted to do in Aden and were prepared to carry out a consistent policy there. Frankly, the main question-marks as I saw them were not in Aden but in London.

In Aden the good-bye parties flew past. Good-bye to the Arab officers of the Federal Army (formerly the Aden Protectorate Levies): dinner on the floor under the dignified presidency of Sultan Fadhl as the Minister of Defence, and the usual exchange of jokes with Brigadier James Lunt, the Force's commander, a witty and sophisticated cavalryman who had graduated to his difficult task via the command of an armoured regiment in Jordan under Glubb. Good-bye to the citizens of Aden: a multi-racial tea-party, with touching speeches and presentations. Good-bye to the Federation: a big floor-dinner in the hall of the brand-new guesthouse at Al Ittihad, and again the generous words and gifts. Good-bye in the messes of the British Regiments: the Colonel leading the way in to dinner with clink of spurs, as the band, clattering cheerfully through 'The Roast Beef of Old England', inducts us into that special world of convivial pride and warm-hearted ceremonial. Farewell souvenir photograph with the servants drawn up on the steps of Government House – cook, Mo, head bearer, head messenger, head cleaner and head chauffeur in the front rank with me, and the rest of the thirty-odd massed behind us, the distinctive uniforms and headgear of the different

departments mixed up higgledy-piggledy together. Farewell to my own closest advisers over dinner and skittles. Farewell to senior officials and Service Commanders at a final dinner in Government House, built round Sam and Audrey Elworthy, who flew in that day from New Zealand and were taking me home with them the following morning.

Sam had finished his tour as Commander-in-Chief in the Middle East at the beginning of May and since then had been on a world tour, including a visit to his native New Zealand, by way of preparation for his next post as Chief of the Air Staff. It was a great piece of luck for me to have him and Audrey with me at the end of my stay in Aden and to be able to fly home with them. The Transport Command Comet was spacious, and would have room for me to change out of uniform after the farewell parade. The thought of having to pull my boots off, unscrew my feathers, unbuckle my sword, etc., in a crowded B.O.A.C. compartment had filled me with gloom and alarm. There was also something artistically appropriate and satisfying in the fact that, having first arrived with the Elworthys from Amman, I should also make with them my final departure to London.

My wife and I had been fortunate indeed to have Sam and Audrey with us for almost the whole of our time in Aden. They became our closest friends. Praise is impertinent, but this much I can say. The close harmony between all three Services, and their admirable working relationship with the civil Government, were directly due to the lead given by the Commander-in-Chief. He and I used to meet regularly, and on both the military and civilian side it was known that any disagreements which might come up at lower levels would be promptly stamped on by the Air Marshal and myself. During the whole of Sam's tour in Aden the Government never had a disagreement with the Services on any matter of significance.

Audrey Elworthy's presence had been a life-saver to my wife and me. In the starched, hierarchic conditions of Colonial society, it is a godsend to be able to put one's feet up and take one's hair down at frequent intervals. Audrey's warm-hearted friendship, combined with an acute curiosity about human nature and an

extraordinarily detached capacity for psychological exploration, were exactly what one needed as a corrective to the formality of much of our lives in Aden.

At the same time it was sad for me to say good-bye to my chief advisers. I cannot resist paying tribute to them here by name. To do so has familiar literary disadvantages; it risks casting the chill of official history over one's narrative. I am convinced, however, that such references are boring only when they are perfunctory. In this case I am doing far more than going through a polite motion; I am recording my obligation to a group who, in an extraordinary spirit of loyalty and union, 'carried' me when I was new to the job, and then enabled me to put into effect the difficult but necessary operation which I have described.

Kenneth Simmonds, the Chief Secretary, had been crippled by ill-health and had gone home on retirement six months before I left. In spite of a painful disability he had courageously stuck to his post and in particular had carried out two of the most critical tasks connected with the merger operation. He had led the Government team to victory in the Legislative Council during the crucial debate of September 1962. He had then taken the chair of an administrative planning committee set up to work out the myriad practical details involved by the merger operation in both its aspects: the entry of Aden into the Federation, and the simultaneous constitutional advance in Aden.

In this latter work he had been seconded by Nigel Pusinelli, one of the most effective and decisive of the middle-grade officials in the Colony. I subsequently appointed Pusinelli to a new post of Director of Establishments, where his energies would be fully employed in seeing the Public Service of Colony, Federation and Protectorate through a difficult phase in its existence.

Arthur Charles, the Speaker of the Legislative Council, presided over its debates with an impartiality which was recognized and admired by the opposition. He had taken the utmost pains to teach the members of the Legislative Council the ways of Westminster democracy, and his efforts in this field had met with a measure of success which filled us all with pride. At the same time, as Public Service Commissioner, he radiated authority and in-

tegrity. He had had experience of this work under the Sudan Government, and in his key post as head of the new Federal Public Service Commission his objectivity and tact won him the confidence both of the Federal Ministers and of the Civil Service as a whole.

Nigel Morris had already left to return to his duties as Deputy Inspector-General of Colonial Police. He would shortly become Police Commissioner in the Bahamas. His work as temporary Director of Security in Aden had been beyond praise; the improvement in our situation during the winter had dated exactly from his arrival. He was greatly assisted in his task by the close and effective co-operation established between the Armed Forces under Brigadier Mike Harbottle, Garrison Security Commander, and the Police under their Commissioner, Arthur Wiltshire.

Gordon Bryce, the Colony's Attorney-General, and Dick Holmes, the Federation's Legal Adviser, had made a major contribution to the merger agreement, not only in drafting the amendments to the Federal Constitution which represented as it were the main backbone of the settlement, but in helping to keep both teams of Ministers on the rails and in preparing an agreement which they could both sign. When merger took place, Bryce became Legal Adviser to the High Commissioner, in which post he had the very necessary function of offering me impartial advice on legal matters which might affect both Aden, the rest of the Federation, and the Eastern Protectorate. His place as Attorney-General in Aden was filled by his deputy, Michael Maloney.

Our information machinery, and particularly our relations with visiting representatives of the international Press, had received a striking and much needed improvement in the autumn of 1962 through the decision to create a temporary new post of Information Adviser on my staff, and through the appointment to it of Ben Strachan of the Foreign Service.

Robin Thorne, who had for years been a pillar of the Aden set-up in the post of Assistant Chief Secretary (Colony), continued in a still more important rôle after the merger, when he took on the key post of Ministerial Secretary and permanent head of the Chief Minister's Office. After Bayoomi's death, his experience and

massive common sense were of great value to the new Chief Minister in his task.

Ian Baillie, a clear-headed son of the Manse, had for some time played a useful part behind the scenes as Protectorate Financial Secretary. He found more scope when moved to the British Agency as deputy to Ken Trevaskis, and, starting from scratch, very soon picked up enough Arabic to become the friend and confidant of the Federal Ministers.

Alastair McIntosh was the elder statesman of the Secretariat. As Protectorate Secretary it was his duty to advise me on matters concerning both the Western and the Eastern Protectorate and on the foreign affairs of Aden and the Protectorate generally. Alastair was a sort of convivial saint. Originally an Oxford don, he had come to the Protectorate in the heroic days after the war, and had gone striding about bringing to whole new areas the benefits of order and good administration. 'Makintoosh' was a mythical figure to the Arabs of the Protectorate, and one of the last of the great line of openers-up. I was sad to think that his long and distinguished service would in the natural course come to its end soon after my departure.

Bernard Lewis, of the Secretariat, had run the administrative machinery behind the merger operation. He was also a keen musician and, as such, consented to lead one of those periodical approaches which English society in Aden makes towards the musical sphere. The autumn crisis was on, and I felt that Lewis would be useful at my evening security meetings. I asked that he should attend, but was told that, if he did, the whole production of *The Gondoliers* would collapse. I replied that in that case, of course, we must put first things first and let Lewis carry on with his rehearsals. This was said in a spirit of pure flippancy, but had more sense in it than I intended. The collapse of *The Gondoliers* would have depressed the morale of the English community far more than any number of general strikes and demonstrations.

Lawrie Hobson's unique contacts in the Colony were of special value to me. At the beginning of the merger business I found him employed in London as head of the Aden Students Office. I succeeded in bringing him back with me to Aden, where he had

served for long periods already, in a newly created post of special adviser to the Governor. With the appearance of an Irish pugilist Lawrie combined an acute political intuition and a close knowledge of personalities and currents of opinion in Aden. He was my indispensable contact-man with Aden Ministers and in the *suqs* of Crater.

Occupying an independent position outside my staff of advisers, Richard Le Gallais in his three years as Chief Justice had done much to increase the efficiency of the Judiciary and to speed up its proceedings. The handsome new Law Courts which were being built on the sea-front in Crater were a monument to his energy and pertinacity.

Throughout the merger negotiations and the subsequent crisis a major part of the burden was born by Ken Trevaskis, Adviser and British Agent in the Western Protectorate, and Tom Oates, acting Chief Secretary. These two stalwarts complemented each other admirably and to my mind well personified two different types in the Colonial Service gallery: Trevaskis, the man from the field, with unrivalled special knowledge of a particular area; Oates, the Secretariat administrator, with a record of devoted service in a number of different Colonies. Behind a monolithic proconsular exterior Trevaskis had a razor-sharp intelligence and an imagination which could apply itself equally to the immediate subtleties of negotiation and to the long-term problems of the future. The confidence which the Federal Ministers placed in him was of great value to me throughout my whole tour of duty. His intimate knowledge of the Western Protectorate prepared me for my tours there and is reflected in these pages.

The appearance of Tom Oates was also deceptive, but in a different way. The air of a hard-working sixth-former – lanky, spectacled, unruly-haired – masked a determined personality and a mature judgement. He could be relied upon to keep his head in the most turbulent situations. Once, when he had been receiving a delegation of troublesome schoolboy demonstrators, a sharp-eyed feminine observer reported to me that dear Tom looked like an owl surrounded by cock-sparrows. His capacity for work was unlimited, and it did not surprise me to hear that,

on a short spell of desperately-needed home leave, he had spent most of his time not in Cornwall but in Great Smith Street helping the Colonial Office over their arrangements for the relief of a hurricane in British Honduras, which he had served and loved during a previous tour of duty.

It was appropriate, and deeply gratifying to me, that the Secretary of State should have approved the promotion of these two officers on merger day to the newly created posts of Deputy High Commissioner (Federation) and Deputy High Commissioner (Aden) respectively. The fact that they were both Cornishmen gave me particular pleasure.

It was also a great satisfaction to me to know, now I was leaving Aden, that my task would be left in Ken Trevaskis' hands.

Outside the official circle and my friends among the Ministers, there were two couples to whom I was particularly sorry to have to say good-bye, the Abdul Rahmans and the Besses. Kamel Abdul Rahman had come to Aden about fifteen years before as a penniless Palestinian refugee. He had built up a successful contracting business which was now engaged in major operations throughout the Middle East. His wife, Abla, was beyond question 'the hostess with the mostest' in Aden. Before her arrival the different social groups were each confined in their own narrow range of entertainments: for the Protectorate, a massive mutton-and-rice blow-out on the floor; for the Adenese, a cosy afternoon chewing *qat* and settling the future of the world with its assistance; for the British, the usual whisky or gin sessions. Abla first introduced Aden to the more sophisticated form of Middle Eastern entertainment, as practised for example in Beirut: hundreds of guests, hours of refreshment, groaning buffets, hours of dancing. Her warm-hearted hospitality made her house on the road to Little Aden an agreeable port of call at all times. Her success in mixing up the different groups in an informal jolly atmosphere was a definite asset to the place.

Tony Besse was Aden's leading European capitalist. Now, in his early thirties, he had succeeded to the business built up between the wars by his father, Monsieur Antonin Besse. Starting in the local specialities of hides and incense, it had developed

into a major trading empire covering Ethiopia and other neighbouring countries as well. Monsieur Besse *père* had been so impressed in his business experience with the need for better education that he had presented Oxford University, which he knew only by reputation, with £1,000,000 to found a new College, now known as St. Anthony's. Tony inherited his father's public spirit and had given great help to various philanthropic causes not only in Aden but in England, where his support for the Atlantic College project had been of marked value. At the same time he was a keen, rather ruthless businessman and a devastating critic of the Government. In this latter aspect he was well seconded by his wife Christiane, who combined blonde beauty with a vigorously questioning mind. The Besses' private denunciations of our policy never quite convinced me, or most of the other people who listened to them. At the same time we remained friends. Christiane's wit and *enfant terrible* capacity for debunking were like a spring of cold water in the middle of a lava-field.

By now I was really on my way. For the last time, the disciplinary, back-to-school feeling of preparing for an early morning function: the six o'clock call; the struggle with bootstraps and collar-hooks; the sour leathery odour from inside the ceremonial Wolseley helmet, like a whiff of the grimmest professionalism, the sense of duty made smellable; the stiff, tight-trousered climb into the open Humber; a last slow drive through the phlegmatic, indifferent streets of Aden; the airport approaches lined with troops; an escort of camel-born lancers leading us at a fast shuffle on to the parade ground; a guard of honour of Scottish and Arab troops drawn up with pipes and bugles in the rear; salute, guns, anthem, inspection, fly-past, march-past; and then the perfectly rehearsed parade was over and I was saying goodbye – a real good-bye this time – to all the leading figures of Aden assembled under a tent. Finally two Arab pipers playing 'Will ye no' come back again?' were leading me slowly out to the aircraft; I was shaking hands with Abdul Rahman Girgirah, Chairman of the Federal Supreme Council; Zein Baharoon, Chief Minister of Aden; General Charles Harington, Commander-in-Chief; Tom Oates, Deputy High Commissioner; and Tony

Boyle, A.D.C.; then the Comet's door closed behind me and we were off.

At one stage during the farewell handshakes in the tent I had been afraid of breaking down; then the stress of emotion passed, and I was able to get through the end of the ceremony in a sort of daze, but without tears; fortunately, for the sight of a heavy-weight satrap blubbing under his feathered topee would have been disconcerting to one and all.

It was, let us admit it, an emotional moment – the end of a splendid and absorbing experience. As the Comet gained height over the deserts and black volcanic rocks of the Western Protectorate. I reviewed some of the unforgettable pictures which my mind's eye was carrying away with it. The Dhala convoy, and the armoured cars of the escort rocking and bucketing their way forward over the boulders like Victorian gunboats in a seaway off Spithead. Duck-shooting in the Abyan Delta, where the water runs thick as broth beside the cotton-fields. The palaces of the Wadi Hadhramaut bursting in palest pink and blue from nests of palm branches inside smooth round walls of mud. The Beihan frontier, with the white minaret and ochre towers of Harīb a few hundred yards away across the flat wadi-bottom, and the glint of light on Yemeni gun positions below the crest of the hill behind. Calm evenings on tour in the oryx country of the Northern Desert, after the sun has gone down behind the dunes at the edge of the Empty Quarter, and the pleasure of writing by lamplight in one's tent, surrounded by the sociable murmurings of the camp.

The special enchantment of Aden. The spicy, sweaty, vital authenticity of the back-streets of Crater. The good-humoured Anglo-Oriental crowds swarming in the evening in front of the shops along the monumental Maalla Mile. The quiet of the terrace of Government House on summer afternoons, when everything seems serene and ordered and immutable; beyond the Indian-Mutiny cannon and the Crimean mortars, the Armed Police sentry paces, impeccable in his scarlet coxcomb turban, like the last embodiment of the British Rāj; faint jazz music floats across from the beach of the Forces Club next door; as evening falls, the lights come up on board a ship putting out to sea; beyond it,

across the bay, the splendidly composed silhouette of the Little Aden Peninsula stands out against the sunset; between its two wings of jagged rock the refinery complex begins to glitter like a centrepiece of diamonds.

At all times of day it is a noble view, and the big ships following each other in procession up and down the channel do one's heart good to watch. British foresight and the energy of half a dozen races have turned this dramatically beautiful extinct volcano into one of the great trading centres of the world. Long may its prosperity continue!

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Johnston, Charles Hepburn,
1912-

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Johnston, Charles Hepburn,
1912-

The view from Steamer Point

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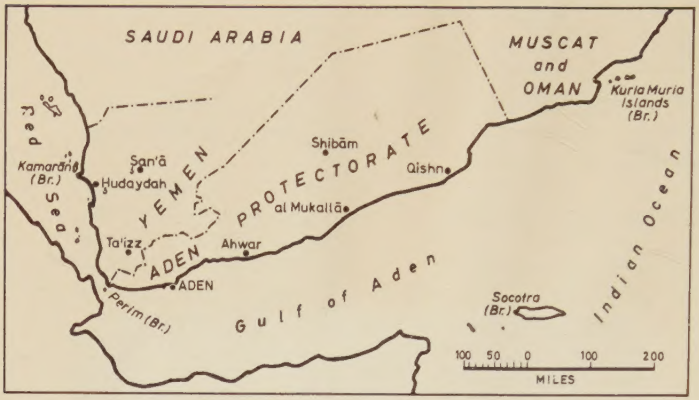

1934 Treaty Line (demarcated)

" " " (undemarcated)

The 1955 Line

Boundary between Eastern Aden Protectorate and Sultanate of Muscat and Oman

Boundary between Aden Colony and Aden Protectorate

Ḥuṣn

RAMLAT SAB'ATAYN

SAN'Ā

MARĀN Is.

Shabwah

Sālif

Harīb

BEIHAN

Ḥudaydah

Red Sea

YEMEN

UPPER WAHIDI

Nisāb

Ataq

AULAQI

Sa'īd

Habbān

SULTANATE

Yashbum

AUDHALI

Al Bayḍa

DATHINAH

Mukayrās

LOWER AULAQI

Qa'tabah

UPPER YAFA

Lawdar

Mūdīyah

Sanāh

Dhala

al Qarāh

LOWER YAFA

TA'IZZ

DHALA

HAUSHABI

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Shibām
Sayūn
Qishn
Sayḥūt
Q A I T I
ash Shiḥr
al Mukallā
A d e n
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Al Ittihad
Khormaksar Airfield
Steamer Point
Crater
ADEN
LITTLE ADEN
Refinery
Gulf of Aden
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CHARLES GREEN.
ABIA
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